

DOCTORAL THESIS

Performances of Thought, Resistance and Support: On The Role and Potential of Performance in the Contemporary Moment

Paramana, Katerina

Award date:
2015

Awarding institution:
University of Roehampton

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

**Performances of Thought, Resistance and Support: On The Role
and Potential of Performance in the Contemporary Moment**

**by
Katerina Paramana BA, MA**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of**

PhD

**Department of Drama, Theatre and Performance
University of Roehampton, London
2015**

To my father
Georgios Paramanas

ABSTRACT

This thesis reopens the conversation about the role of art and the artist in relation to society in the contemporary moment. It does so by attempting to reconfigure the relationship of art to politics, the social and ethics. My perspective in writing is that of an artist who wants to rethink and nuance for herself through her own work, by looking at that of other artists and by engaging with recent debates *how* an artwork may have the potential to effect change in the current economy. I started with these questions: ‘Can the kind of work contemporary artists Tino Sehgal, Jérôme Bel and I make and present in theatres and galleries effect change in the contemporary moment? Where can the potential to effect change in, what is referred as neoliberal capitalism, might be located? What kind of artwork has the potential to effect change?’ Attempting to nuance the role that art can play in society, I examine the *specific* economy of relations that Sehgal’s, Bel’s and my own work produce within themselves and with the economies in which they are embedded.

I suggest that the kind of work Sehgal, Bel and I make and present in theatres and galleries can effect change in the contemporary moment when the economy of relations the artwork produces within itself (the sociality the work creates through its materiality, dramaturgy and relation to the spectator) and with the economies in which it is embedded (the manner in which it is critically situated in relation to its place of presentation and the economies of dance, theatre, art and neoliberal capitalism) creates tension between art, politics, the social and ethics by ‘supporting the “other”’: by questioning its role in these economies and by creating spaces of decision, affect and creative possibility. However, I also emphasise that change requires the actions towards it by multiple actors who are part of multiple

spheres and who attempt to make it a reality; it also requires that we first pause and think about what dreams we have for the future and our ethics of relation, negotiate the answers, make decisions, organise and act, with the belief that we can change things. Art, I conclude, can play a role not only in reminding us that we can change things, but it can imagine new worlds and poke us into action.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
• On Motivations (On Crisis and Postmodern Thought)	2
• So What Now (In Politics)?	22
• So What Now (In Art)?	26
• What Now? The Subject of this Thesis.	44
• How to Read this Thesis: Methodological Considerations, the Function of Different Texts & The Differences Between Practices	51
SECTION I	59
• ‘Inter-Vention’ 1 – <i>Muddle Muddle Toil And Trouble Disorder and Potentiality - A Lecture-Performance</i>	60
• <u>Chapter 1</u> : (Re)Making Ann Lee	71
• <u>Chapter 2</u> : <i>These Associations, This Economy</i>	96
• ‘Inter-Vention’ 2 – <i>Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?</i>	149
SECTION II	176
• ‘Inter-Vention’ 3 – On Ethics and Economy	177
• <u>Chapter 3</u> : Jérôme Bel and the Economy of Contemporary Dance	186
• <u>Chapter 4</u> : The Jérôme Bel Economy – <i>Veronique Doisneau & The Show Must Go On</i>	215
• ‘Inter-Vention’ 4 – <i>Martyro</i>	218
• ‘Inter-Vention’ 5 – <i>IDEA: THIS IS GOOD</i>	283
EPILOGUE	299
APPENDICES	
• Appendix 1: <i>Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality – A Lecture-Performance</i>	309
• Appendix 2: <i>Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?</i>	309
• Appendix 3: <i>Martyro</i>	309
• Appendix 4: <i>IDEA: THIS IS GOOD</i>	309
• Appendix 5: Ethical Approval and Sample Consent Form	310
BIBLIOGRAPHY	313

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

'Support' is one of the key words of this thesis. As I am trying to find a way to give thanks to all the people that have supported me throughout this research project, my thoughts turn to the one that has been instrumental to my thinking about life. This is my father, Georgios Paramanas, who will not have the opportunity to witness the completion of this project. My first thanks go to him.

I am grateful to my supervisors Professor Joe Kelleher and Dr Anna Pakes, whose intelligence, clarity of thinking, inspiration and encouragement supported me throughout this project. I have the utmost love and respect for them.

This project would not have been possible without the scholarship I received from the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation. Many thanks for this opportunity to devote time to what I love.

A special thank you to the artists Tino Sehgal and Jérôme Bel who continue to make me think about and question art and my role as an artist.

I am grateful to my fellow art-life travellers Elena Koukoli, Eirini Kartsaki, Antje Hildebrandt, Stella Dimitrakopoulou, Anna Bigotte Vieira, Pedro Lagoa, Simos Veis, and Gigi Argyropoulou, who have supported me with their friendship, constructive criticism and contributions to many of the artworks discussed in this thesis.

I would like to also thank for their support the Directors and Associate Researchers of the *Performance Matters* creative research project and my inspiring colleagues Dr Louise Owen, Dr Aoife Monks, Dr Seda Ilter and Dr Fintan Walsh. Many thanks also to the staff and graduate students at the Departments of Drama, Theatre and Performance and the Department of Dance at University of Roehampton, especially to Professor Adrian Heathfield, Professor Jen Parker-Starbuck, Dr Efrosini Protopapa and Dr Sarah Gorman for their guidance.

I am very lucky to have always had the love and support of my family: my father, Georgios Paramanas, my mother, Mary Paramana, my sister, Theodora Paramana and my brother, Nikos Paramanas – I could not have done this without you.

Finally, to my partner Tom Wagner, who has stood by me at every turn of life for the last eight years: I am grateful for your love, our stimulating conversations, your optimism, humour and understanding.

INTRODUCTION

It is Sunday afternoon in December 2014 and I am sitting by the window smoking, watching people walking by on Deptford High Street. As I watch the passers-by and observe the parallel forms of labour taking place on the High Street (I am working on the PhD, the construction workers at the back are building a new block of flats, the drycleaner across the street is altering a pair of trousers and the cleaning man is preparing the *Job Centre* bar to open its doors), I am trying to figure out what kind of introduction to this thesis would be most constructive. Along with the rest of Deptford, the High Street is undergoing a major gentrification to which, as an artist, I have unintentionally contributed. The arts are often, in one form or another, implicated in gentrification. However, it is not artists themselves that *cause* gentrification, but capitalism's incessant thirst for profit that drives the process. In Deptford, as in many (formerly) economically-disadvantaged areas around London, 'rent gaps'¹ have been identified and exploited, and 'cultural processes' like art are being used to bring capital into the area (Bolton, 2013). As often is the case, this is happening under the guise of 'regeneration', which eventually drives the locals (and the artists) away by making rent unaffordable. Deptford exemplifies how our practices and everyday actions affect and are affected by the different economies in which we are embedded and our relations with them. Its gentrification also shows that *motivations*, here for example, those of artists (whose aim is to create artwork) and investors (who aim to profit from it), are very important in attempting to understand, articulate, nuance and take steps to address a problem.

¹ A 'rent gap' is 'the difference between the current ground rent, and what rent the land

This introduction has two purposes. First, it frames the writing that follows it by articulating the motivations for this research project. Second, along with an outline of the thesis, it discusses the theoretical framework of the thesis and relevant debates, and the case studies (artists Tino Sehgal and Jérôme Bel) and methodology chosen to address the questions with which this project started. These questions are: 'Can the kind of work contemporary artists Tino Sehgal, Jérôme Bel and I make and present in theatres and galleries effect change in the contemporary moment? Where might the potential to effect change in, what is referred to as 'neoliberal capitalism', be located? What kind of artwork has the potential to effect change?' Let us begin with the motivations for this project.

ON MOTIVATIONS

I am an artist with a background in theatre and dance. I embarked on a PhD study because I hoped that the time and space afforded to me by studying in an academic setting (and which was made possible by funding to do so), would allow me to explore unresolved questions regarding my practice and my role as an artist. I also hoped it would give me the opportunity to bring together fields of knowledge that I was interested in: the visual and performing arts, philosophy, critical theory, cultural studies, political economy and sociology. Before and at the beginning of this study, I created performances that were located somewhere in between experimental theatre and choreography and drew on postmodern thinking for their conceptualisation and materialisation. I presented these performances in theatres, studio spaces and galleries. My practice was concerned with the construction of systems, the relationships they afford and the thinking, ideas, values and practices they (re)produce. It is during the research for this work that I

encountered the work of Tino Sehgal and Jérôme Bel, the case studies for this research project. My work has certain affinities with the work of these two contemporary artists, including an interest in systems. (I will elaborate on the reasons for my interest in systems and other affinities, as well as differences with their work, in due course). Moreover, I was, and have always been, engaged with political matters, interested in how, as a person and as an artist, I can contribute to a society characterised by equality and justice. When I started this PhD in 2010, two in some respects interrelated occurrences served as particular motivations for the questions I ask and address in this research project. The first was the crisis – both social and economic – in Europe and the US; the second was a ‘misuse’ of postmodern ambiguity as it concerned everyday life and as I observed it in the London arts economy.

1. On Crisis

In 2008, I moved to London from the US, where I was studying, performing and making work, to study for an MA degree. My stay in the US (Sept. 2000 - July 2008) coincided with the two George W. Bush administrations and a climate of war, fear and censorship. By July 2008, the housing market in the US had crashed, contributing to the global economic crisis as we know it today. In 2010, when I started this PhD project, the ‘Arab Spring’ started and efforts to control it led among other effects to, what has been argued as, ‘the growing power of the western-backed autocracies of the Gulf, the brutality of Egypt’s new dictatorship and the maelstrom in post-intervention Libya’ (Seumas, 2015). By 2011, the economic crisis was in full swing; budget cuts were made in several sectors, including in education, in the UK; the Occupy movements had started first in New York (Occupy Wall Street) and then spread to many countries including Spain and

Greece; and Troika (the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank) had started and has continued to impose strict measures on Greece, where I was born and raised. In addition, Greece was also now facing the re-mergence of fascism through Golden Dawn, a fascist organisation that managed to enter the Greek parliament after the 2012 national elections and currently holds a 5% in the polls for the upcoming 25 January 2015 national elections. The economic crisis has led to the rise of populist right in many European countries (for example, of the Front National, in France and UKIP in the UK). The rise of the right, capital flight and recession are still very much felt around the world (Seumas, 2015). However, what is also currently felt is a rise of support for the left and a desire and effort for a Europe with a different economic and political foundation. This is especially the case in countries most affected by the crisis, as seen in the increasing popularity of left wing parties such as Greece's SYRIZA and Spain's Podemos.

The crisis is not only economic, but social. As indicated by the rising levels of domestic violence, unemployment, poverty, homelessness and popularity of the right in Greece, it has affected societies at their core. However, a sense of crisis of the social was apparent even before the economic crisis made it 'visible' and, more importantly, 'felt'. In a talk delivered on 9 March 2013 for TedxCalarts: *Performance, Body & Presence*, Franco Bifo Berardi argued that crisis and panic – the 'sudden perception that the relation of your body to your environment is broken and accelerated...that the outside rhythm is not the rhythm of your body, of your needs and desires, but of fear, competition and precariousness' – have become commonplace in our daily life (Berardi, 2013).

Accelerated rhythms, competition and precarity are characteristics of most western (or westernised) societies in the twenty-first century. Several thinkers have argued that these are a result of the currently globally dominant economic system that is referred to as 'neoliberal capitalism' (e.g. Harvey, 2005; Žižek, 2010; Barnett, 2010; Gauthier et al., 2013, Brown, 2015). When I began this PhD, 'neoliberalism' was a term that continuously came up in art and academia – the economies in which I work. However, most of the time it was used in a general manner without offering a clear definition of the term or articulation of its effects. I became interested in the discourse around the term not only because I was myself experiencing what people articulated as its effects (for example, precarity and competition), but also because the lack of nuancing with which the term was (and is still) often being used appeared to make many people resistant to or dismissive of it. For example, Tino Sehgal, one of the case studies of this thesis, who has studied economics and dance, does not accept it. My concern with the scepticism or dismissal of the term was that it might result in a lack of resistance to or insufficient addressing of its causes and effects. Therefore, before I discuss the second motivation for this project – and because I will be using the term 'neoliberalism' in this thesis as shorthand for its effects at the individual and systemic levels – I would like to address my understanding of the term.

*On Neoliberal Capitalism –
What is it that we are actually talking about?*

It appears that part of the problem with the term 'neoliberalism' – and 'neoliberal' capitalism – stems from the term's relatively young age. Unlike 'neoliberalism', capitalism is a term that has been in our vocabulary for quite some time now (since 1850 according to Braudel – 1979, p. 237). 'We' have a general

understanding of the term and are familiar with the function of this system, whether we ideologically agree with or oppose it. Our familiarity with the term is also reflected by its inclusion in *widely* available dictionaries. *Oxford Dictionaries*, for example, defines capitalism as ‘an economic and political system in which a country’s trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state’ (2014a). Of course, once we nuance the term a bit more, we can look at aspects of capitalism such as property rights, exploitation, wage labour and the widespread inequality as a consequence of capitalism’s incessant thirst for profit and of the accumulation of capital by those who already possess it.

Karl Marx, critic of classical economics, argues that, in capitalism, the proletariat is being exploited because labour is the only commodity that creates surplus value (Marx, 1981). Very generally speaking, exploitation is built into the capitalist system² and its main aim is the accumulation of profit instead of equality and the prosperity of every citizen – although many hold the opinion that the creation of capital is a precondition for the establishment of equality and prosperity. However, not many can deny that capitalism’s thirst for profit is never quenched, that it subsumes everything, that this process is controlled by private people/companies /corporations, whose primary interest is not in equality and justice and that it is a

² Marxian philosopher and cultural critic Slavoj Žižek argues that ‘[o]nly in capitalism is exploitation “naturalized”, inscribed into the functioning of the economy, and not the result of extra-economic pressure and violence. This is why, with capitalism, we enjoy personal freedom and equality: there is no need for explicit social domination, since domination is already implicit in the structure of the production process. This is also why the category of surplus value is crucial here: Marx always emphasized that the exchange between worker and capitalist is “just” in the sense that workers (as a rule) get paid the full value of their labour-power as a commodity – there is no direct “exploitation” here: that is, it is not that workers “are not paid the full value of the commodity they are selling to the capitalists”. The exploitation occurs because labor-power as a commodity has the paradoxical character of producing more value than it is itself worth. This process is obfuscated in “bourgeois” market ideology’ (2010, pp. 207-208).

system that is very difficult to uproot.³ It is these deep structures that the current social movements, from Occupy to the left parties in Greece and Spain are interested in changing. The term capitalism then and its function as a system are not new to 'us'. But the term 'neoliberalism', often attached to it, is.

Our lack of familiarity with the term 'neoliberalism' is evidenced by its absence in widely available dictionaries. For example, when you search for 'neoliberalism' in *Oxford Dictionaries* (2014b), you are redirected to a page for the definition of 'neoliberal' instead. 'Neoliberal' is defined as 'relating to or denoting a modified form of liberalism tending to favour free-market capitalism' (ibid.). *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* redirects to a page with a similarly insufficient definition of 'neoliberal': 'a liberal who de-emphasizes traditional liberal doctrines in order to seek progress by more pragmatic methods' (2014b). The lack of any sufficient definition of the term in adjective, let alone in noun, form requires one to do further research.

The names of several thinkers who deal with the term 'neoliberalism' circulate in academia, with David Harvey being among the most often referred to. Harvey considers neoliberalism 'a theory of political economic practices' that affect both the role of the individual – by 'propos[ing] that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills' – and the

³ Canadian Marxist historian, philosopher and political economist Moishe Postone argues that '[t]he central issue for Marx is not only that labor is being exploited – labor is exploited in all societies, other than maybe those of hunter-gatherers – but, rather that the exploitation of labor is effected by structures that labor itself constitutes. So, for example, if you get rid of aristocrats in a peasant-based society, it's conceivable that the peasants could own their own plots of land and live off of them. However, if you get rid of the capitalists, you are not getting rid of capital. Social domination will continue to exist in that society until the structures that constitute capital are gotten rid of' (Postone cited in Žižek, 2010, p. 205).

role of the state – which is now expected to ‘create and preserve an institutional framework’ appropriate to neoliberal practices (Harvey, 2005, p. 2):

The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money...set up those military, defence, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and...guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets...[I]f markets do not exist...then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture...interventions...must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit (Harvey, 2005, p. 2).

Harvey emphasises that instead of the state being concerned with the welfare of the collective of individuals, it is primarily concerned with creating a framework that fosters the political and economic practices of neoliberalism – practices that are antithetical to the welfare of the collective of individuals. Although Harvey argues that neoliberalism is a ‘*theory of political economic practices*’ (2005, p. 2, my emphasis), others understand and theorise neoliberalism differently. For example, François Gauthier, Tuomas Martikainen and Linda Woodhead (2013) trace the progression of the term from modernity to the present day and suggest that ‘neoliberalism’ was initially a *theory and ideology* with roots in the 18th century (in the thinking of classical liberal theorists like John Locke, Adam Smith and James Mill, who emphasised the importance of the individual, her freedom and happiness, and of free markets); that it *turned policy* at the end of the 1960s with Friedrich von Hayek, Ludwig von Mises and Milton Friedman – the fathers of neoliberalism; and that from the late 1970s onwards, the neoliberal ideas were ‘*transformed into a political-economic programme*’ (Gauthier et al., 2013, p. 14, my emphasis). Michel Foucault (2008 [1978-79]) and Wendy Brown (2015) on the other hand consider neoliberalism a *governing rationality* that did not evolve from liberalism in the manner articulated by Gauthier et al., but that it was a

reprogramming of liberalism: that unlike the latter, which considered the human a *homo oeconomicus* in the sphere of the market, neoliberalism considers, treats and expects the human to be *homo oeconomicus* in all spheres of life – for they are all treated as markets (Brown, 2015). It is no surprise, then, that the term is not widely understood, that it seems to be used in an all-encompassing manner and that, therefore, many people are sceptical about it. Let us look at the two different approaches – Gauthier et al.'s on the one hand and Foucault's and Brown's on the other – in more detail.

(Neoliberalism as Theory and Ideology – 18th century)

Gauthier et al., suggest that modernization can be defined 'in terms of the emergence of the nationbound, bureaucratic state as well as a capitalist, market-based economy' (2013, pp. 10-11). They argue that modern thinkers envisioned a government founded, not on onto-theological bases, but on people's sovereignty. However, until the end of the seventeenth century, economic relations depended on social hierarchies. It is not until the eighteenth century that economic relations become autonomous. This is suggested in works such as those by François Quesnay and John Locke, who influenced Adam Smith's *Inquiry into the Nature* (1776) and *Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), which are considered 'foundational for political economy' (Gauthier et al., 2013, p. 11).

For Gauthier et al., eighteenth century modernity's goal was to find answers as to how social order can be maintained in the absence of a theological framework. Some answers to this question were political, while others were economic. According to republican theories the state was to play the central role in social

regulation, emphasising the importance of a 'strong government, a positive, civic definition of liberty and a substantive conception of the political body' (Gauthier et al., 2013, p. 11). Classical liberal theorists like John Locke, Adam Smith and James Mill supported a radical conception of individualism and believed that the market needs to be '*the central organizing force in political and social life*' (ibid., my emphasis). They believed that the market spontaneously harmonizes individual interests, because they considered prices to be produced by a 'value-neutral' system, which in turn – as long as the state does not interfere – produces social harmony (ibid.). The market then, Gauthier et al. argue, begins not as regulatory mechanism of economic activity, but as '*a moral system of social regulation* based on the optimal expansion of human freedom, conceived essentially in terms of economic activities and rights to property' (ibid.). However, although the market appears as both a concept and a programme (which was '*an economic answer to a political question, that of social regulation*'), it remains a 'political utopia' – an ideology – until the European society transforms from a commercial to a capitalist, industrial and market-driven society (ibid., pp. 11-12, my emphasis).

The political ideology of liberalism, which Gauthier et al. refer to as 'the most influential of modernity', placed importance on the individual and on freedom, instead of on the collective and on equality (Gauthier et al., 2013, p. 12). In addition, unlike republicanism and socialism whose conception of liberty was political and was to be expressed through civic participation, liberalism conceptualised liberty as 'radically private, even pre-social and apolitical, its standard being economic entrepreneurship' (ibid., p. 12). According to Karl Polanyi, the rise of nationalism that resulted in World War I, World War II, as well as the Great Depression, were mainly caused by the *laissez-faire* attitude of the

early 1900s liberalism (ibid.).

(Neoliberalism turning Policy – 1945-1970s)

After 1945, the effects of liberalism on the rise of nationalism resulted in a backlash in the attitude towards the regulation of economic activities by the state. The concern with inequalities led to the implementations of measures and policies that aimed at limiting them. John Maynard Keynes advocated that the state needed to intervene more in the economic activities, because markets did not ‘naturally’ tend towards equilibrium. This led to the development of welfare states across the West. It is as a result of these social concerns that egalitarian liberalism emerges, but it does not shake the foundations of liberalism: the focus is still on ‘*individual autonomy and the model of the market*’, the state has a procedural role only securing some personal and welfare rights ‘through “value-neutral”, objective and rational procedures’, the political body has less power and there is an effort to weaken nationalism (Gauthier et al., pp. 12-13, my emphasis).

Friedrich von Hayek and Ludwig von Mises from Austria and Milton Friedman from the US attack both egalitarian liberalism and Keynes’s efforts for a welfare state, as well as socialism. They strive to renew classical liberalism, claiming that ‘state intervention naturally inclined towards totalitarianism and “liberty-cide”’ (Gauthier et al., 2013, p. 13). Gauthier et al. suggest that the neoliberal movement spread in part thanks to the meetings of a society of economists founded by Hayek:

Inspired by Walter Lippmann who wrote that ‘the state must limit itself to the administration of justice between men going about their business’, the neoliberal movement coalesced around Hayek’s Mont Pelerin Society⁴ meetings which spawned over one hundred influential think tanks around the world (Gauthier et al., 2013, p. 13, my emphasis).

⁴ The Mont Pelerin Society had its first meeting in 1947 and is still active today (*The Mont Pelerin Society*, 2015).

It is here that Gauthier et al. begin to echo David Harvey. First, they argue that neoliberalism, although not 'a "pure" theory', is successfully described by the slogan 'less state, more market' (Gauthier et al., 2013, p. 13). Second, like Harvey, they suggest that in neoliberalism, the state's role is reduced to guaranteeing 'property rights, contractual liberty and military spending', while the market plays 'a central role in all aspects of social regulation' (ibid.) and expands 'in the spaces opened through state and welfare reform' (Gauthier et al., 2013, pp. 15-16). This new role of the market enables neoliberalism to be reinforced as an ideology but also be presented as the only 'Rational Choice' (ibid.).

Several factors according to Gauthier et al. aided the spread of neoliberalism. First, it was the transition in the 1970's from Fordist industrial capitalism (in which large-scale factory enterprises were 'distinguished by economies of scale and rationalized, standardized production methods'), to post-Fordist capitalism, which was characterised by 'more flexible modes of production, global dispersal of labour processes, a cultural turn and "time-space compression"' (Gauthier et al., 2013, pp. 4-5). Gauthier et al. describe the consequences of this shift⁵ noting as most important the shift of Western societies from production-capitalist to being finance and consumer-capitalist (ibid.).

⁵ With the shift to post-Fordist capitalism 'capitalist enterprises become much harder for nation-states and politicians to control and regulate; organized labour and trade unions diminish in significance; classes and "identities" proliferate; markets become increasingly segmented; identity becomes more closely tied to the purchase and display of consumer goods; the speed with which goods are manufactured and consumed increases; management arises as an autonomous field of enterprise and scholarship with respect to "human relations" within – and without – the workplace; "governance" replaces government in a shift towards networked organization, flexibility, mobility, "real time" responsiveness and individual responsibility; and the significance of advertising, marketing, the circulation of symbols and a class of "cultural creative" increases' (Gauthier et al., 2013, pp. 4-5).

The second factor they consider to have aided in the spread of neoliberalism is globalization, which both compressed the world and intensified our consciousness of it as a whole (Gauthier et al., 2013, p. 2). Finally, they believe that consumerism's rise as a dominant cultural ethos and 'matrix of lifestyle' after the 1950s, along with the adoption and wide accessibility of communication technologies, drove cultural globalization and therefore functioned as fertile ground for the spread of neoliberalism. In this 'consumer' or 'market' society, consumerism becomes a 'vehicle for the extension and radicalization of the modern individualistic culture of authenticity and expressivity' (ibid., pp. 15-16).

(Neoliberalism turning Governmental Programme – late 1970s onwards)

From the late 1970s onwards, neoliberal ideas become a dominant political and cultural ideology, transforming into a *political-economic programme* despite neoliberalism's denial of being neither ideological nor an explicit, systematic political project (Gauthier et al., 2013, pp. 14-15). This becomes possible as a result of several factors: deregulation policies in governments across the world (for example, Deng Xiaoping's (1978) in China, Margaret Thatcher's (1979) in the UK and Ronald Reagan's (1981) in the US); Paul Volcker's influence at the Federal Reserve in the US; and the increasing influence of international agencies – such as the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – bond-rating firms such as Standard & Poor's, Moody's and Fitch, and private think tanks. Gauthier et al. emphasise that the emergence of neoliberalism was not in response to a cultural or social *need*, but instead the result of 'the *characterization* of economic necessities as *interpreted* by some of the economic and financial elite' (ibid., p. 14, my emphasis). As painfully evidenced

today by the austerity programmes imposed on southern European countries, neoliberalism

[...] often presents itself as an austere programme that finds legitimacy in complying with the supposedly scientific facts of economic reality; one which insists on being the only rational governmental option, as Thatcher's famous insistence on there being 'no alternative' vividly illustrates. Neoliberal policies are seen as 'necessary adjustments to ineluctable economic laws' (Gauthier et al., 2013, p. 14).

Gauthier et al.'s comparison of classical liberalism to neoliberalism appears to have commonalities with Michel Foucault's (2008 [1978-79]) and Wendy Brown's (2015) thinking on neoliberalism. Gauthier et al. suggest that, where classical liberalism was founded on the idea that an 'ideal' market spontaneously harmonizes the interests of actors and is therefore a *model* for 'optimal social regulation', neoliberalism took the next step (Gauthier et al., 2013, p. 13). It 'redefined the social sphere as a form of economic field', which now 'include[s] and subsumes all forms of social life and human action', completing the transformation: market economics are no longer only embedded within spheres of activity such as the social, the political and the religious, but are now that in which other social realities are themselves embedded (ibid.).

(Neoliberalism as Governing Rationality)

Wendy Brown (2015), following Michel Foucault (2008), echoes in some respects Gauthier et al.'s thinking. She argues that unlike liberalism which considered the human a *homo oeconomicus* in the sphere of the market, neoliberalism considers, treats and expects the human to be *homo oeconomicus* in all spheres of life – for they are all treated as markets (Brown, 2015). Foucault, however, offers a different

account of how we arrive at neoliberalism than Gauthier et al. He believes that neoliberalism has two birthplaces linked by F.A. Hayek: the Ordoliberal or Freiburg School, which emerged in the 1930s in Germany and Austria, and the Chicago School of economics which emerged in the 1950s (Foucault, 2008, pp. 322-323). Hayek, an Ordoliberalist who studied in the US in the 1950s and later worked at the University of Freiburg, enabled to a great extent the fusion of the two school's intellectual differences (Brown, 2015, p. 61). Foucault spends some time articulating the differences between the two schools (2008, pp. 322-323), but what is important here are two things. First, the relation he sees between liberalism and neoliberalism: Foucault does not believe that neoliberalism is a 'resurgence or recurrence of old forms of liberal economics' (2008, p. 117-118), but a 'new programming of liberal governmentality' (2008, p. 94) or, as he refers to it elsewhere, a 'transformation of classical liberalism' (p. 131). (Brown refers to it this as 'a reprogramming of liberalism – 2015, p. 56). For Foucault, unlike in liberalism where the state was to not interfere with the market, in neoliberalism, the state 'govern[s] *for* the market, not *because* of the market' (2008, p. 121) and therefore society is regulated by it (the market). Second, Foucault refers to neoliberalism not as a theory and ideology that became policy and governmental programme as Gauthier et al. (2013) suggest, but as a *political rationality* that became a *governing rationality*. Let us see how Foucault (2003, 2008, 2009) arrives at this conclusion.

The argument for neoliberalism as a governing rationality has its roots at Foucault's notion of 'biopolitics' (2003). In a series of lectures he delivered at the Collège de France between 1975 and 1979, Foucault argues that whereas in seventeenth and the first half of eighteenth century an emergence of techniques of

power are observed that were centred on the individual body and aimed at ensuring its discipline and organization through 'systems of surveillance, inspections, bookkeeping and reports', in the second half of the eighteenth century a new technology emerges (2003, p. 242). This new technology, new power, is not applied to the individual body, but to a multiplicity of bodies: to a global mass, to 'man-as-species', to populations. Its aim is to rule masses, not through an 'anatomo-politics of the human body', but through what Foucault refers to as 'biopolitics': processes such as the ratio of births to deaths and the rate of production, mechanisms that have an economic rationality such as 'insurance, individual and collective savings, safety measures' (ibid., pp. 243-244), but also mechanisms such as statistical elements (ibid., p. 246). The overall aim of 'biopolitics' according to Foucault is to 'take control of life and the biological processes of man-species' and ensure not only their discipline, but their regularization (ibid., 247).

It is from his notion of 'biopolitics' as a way to rule, to *govern bodies* from a distance, that Foucault's thinking on neoliberalism develops. He refers to neoliberalism initially as a 'political rationality': forms of reason that are 'combined in the practices of states and citizens' to rule societies and populations 'intensively, yet indirectly' (Brown, 2015, p. 116). He argues, however, that neoliberalism became a 'governing rationality': a way to 'govern as well as structure life and activity as a whole' and direct the way we conduct ourselves, govern how we live (ibid., p. 117). Neoliberalism, then, is concerned with 'governing *homo economicus* (and the economy as a whole) "without touching it"' (Brown, 2015, p. 57), in the same manner that biopolitics was concerned with *governing bodies* from a distance. It does so by 'taking the formal principles of a

market economy and referring and relating them to, of projecting them on to a general art of government' (Foucault, 2008, p. 131); by extending, in other words, the rationality of the market to all spheres of life, not necessarily by monetizing 'all social conduct and social relations, but, more radically, [by] cast[ing] them in an exclusively economic frame', whose dimensions are both epistemological and ontological (Brown, 2015, p. 62).

Although, as geographer and social theorist Clive Barnett explains, the terms 'neoliberal' and 'neoliberalism' themselves only began to be theorised at the end of the 1990s (2010, p. 269), the ideas and practices related to them, as we saw from the accounts of Gautier et al. (2013), Foucault (2008) and Brown (2015), have been around for much longer. Whosever account we choose to look at neoliberalism's birth(s) and development or reprogramming from liberalism, what is certain is that its effects are currently deeply felt at both the economic and social level. Neoliberalism has not only affected economies, but instituted ethics and rationalities: the economic rationalization of relationships, the emphasis on personal responsibility and self-care as solutions to problems that are systemic, the prioritization of profit, and the capitalization of people's productive agency. The crisis – the first motivation for this research project – then, is equally economic as well as social. It has affected our relationship to ourselves, to others, to time and space; it has and is affecting our being in the world, for our being is always social. Culture, art and art making, therefore, cannot but reflect these effects.

I would like here to acknowledge that our current economy, 'neoliberal capitalism' (if we accept the term), is not totalising: within the neoliberal capitalist economy

there are still contradictions and practices that do not conform to its characteristics and demands. However, I will be using the term as shorthand in this thesis to refer to the current globally dominant economic system and to the effects it has on the individual and on the social.

2. On 'Misuses' of Postmodern Thought

The second motivation for the questions I ask and address in this research project is what I consider a 'misuse' of postmodern thinking as it concerns everyday life and which I observe in the London arts economy. I am specifically referring here to the emphasis on the importance of ambiguity and relationality.

In the contemporary arts scene in London, it is still considered avant-garde to make work influenced by postmodernist thinking / post-structuralist thought, which is characterised by ambiguity, multiplicity of meaning, heterogeneity and a blurring/breaking down of boundaries and categories. This is a Derridean approach to life and art, where existing binaries/oppositions and narratives (constructs of identity, binaries such as male-female, passive-active and so forth) are to be deconstructed (Derrida, 1997). The grand narratives (of 'progress', 'the divine') have ended; the author is dead; the maker is to create space for the spectator to create meaning; gender is socially constructed and so forth. I am one of those artists who have espoused postmodernist thinking. This is reflected in the artwork I make. However, I have always been wary of how accessible this kind of work, which claims to democratise meaning creation, actually is. (Why could my father, an intelligent man but not educated in art, not access it, for example?) Furthermore, what I have observed since I moved to London in 2008 is the tendency of many of us (artists in art, theatre, dance, performance) that make this

kind of work to, in my opinion, ‘misuse’ this philosophy of thinking, making and being. Ambiguity, multiplicity of meaning and deconstruction of what we thought we once fully understood does not make everything ‘relative’ and therefore acceptable; it does not mean that because everything is fluid, uncertain and relational, we need to be flexible, accepting and accommodating, remaining mere observers of this uncertainty and relationality. Things are not *simply* ‘relative’.

As linguist and semiotician Émile Benveniste argues, ‘to say that...values are “relative” means that they are relative *to each other*. Now, is that not precisely the proof of their *necessity*?’ (Benveniste, 1996, p. 68). Benveniste emphasises that signs are not isolated, but part of a system of signs. Within this system, ‘[e]verything is so *necessary*... that modifications of the whole and of the details reciprocally condition one another’ (ibid.). Therefore, he suggests that

[t]he relativity of values is the best proof that they depend closely upon one another in the synchrony of a system which is always being threatened, always being restored...[A]ll values are values of opposition...defined only by their difference [and] maintain themselves in a mutual relationship of necessity... If language is something other than a fortuitous conglomeration of erratic notions and sounds uttered at random, it is because necessity is inherent in its structure as in all structure (Benveniste, 1996, pp. 68-69).

It is important then to recognise how signs, concepts, ideas, values, language and so forth are all part of systems, how they each relate to other parts of their system, what their dependency is and what they ‘do’. In other words, it is important to recognise what effects they have. Simply accepting ambiguity and understanding everything as ‘relative’ in an un-nuanced manner can have implications for how we understand our relation to ourselves, to others and to systems, and affect our everyday practices.

Postmodern ambiguity, then, has a problematic side that can reproduce, for example, neoliberal ethics and rationalities (by which I am referring here to an emphasis on individual freedom, personal responsibility and self-care) and accommodate capital, which thrives on ambiguity and contradiction. If anything, post-structuralist thinking advocates to always question, be specific in our articulations and actions, demand specificity and be active instead of passively accepting ambiguities; for it is ambiguities and the breaking down of boundaries (for example between economy and the social sphere, work and life) that the current system *works on*, especially because it *works with* the immaterial: it uses and capitalises on ideas, practices, human relationships and people's productive agency, and encourages very specific modes of relationality.

Jeremy Gilbert puts this aptly. He observes that Derridean thinking 'has been critically important in recent years for several strands of feminist, queer and postcolonial theory' (Gilbert 2014, p. 127). All these theories reject essentialist notions such as 'personal identity as inhering in the subject, or...a homogeneous identitarian community' and emphasise 'the radical multiplicity and relationality of all identities' (ibid.). However, he argues that, although 'the work of post-structuralist thinkers such as [Judith] Butler, [Homi K.] Bhabha and [Gayatri Chakravorty] Spivak is always directed against any individualist conception of the self, always stressing the partial, "hybrid", fragmentary and inherently multiple aspects of selfhood', we must not collapse their anti-essentialism 'into a naïve individualism which believes that "everyone is just free to be who they want to be"' (ibid.). Gilbert considers this collapsing to be something that 'becomes all too easy' in the current neoliberal moment. He suggests that Butler's claim that 'identity is the lived scene of coalition's difficulty' (1993, p. 115) summarises perfectly 'the

radically relational, deconstructive understanding of identity': that 'every experience of identity is an experience of the complexity inherent in managing a range of necessarily social, collective, political commitments and claims' (Gilbert, 2014, p. 127).

Gilbert's point here is of outmost importance, for, due to the high level of abstraction in post-structuralist thought, many of us accept (along with the 'banal individualism' he describes earlier in his book) neoliberal rationalities such as the idea that we can advance as human beings by liberating our individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills and that, therefore, we need to, for example, brand ourselves, construct an identity for our audience and find our niche in today's market economy, in this way helping neoliberal capitalism do its work. Importantly, Gilbert emphasises that it is not that neoliberal capitalism denies relationality altogether, but regulates it by 'prohibiting many types of relationship and only enabling others, to ensure that only those which facilitate capital accumulation can occur' (Gilbert, 2014, pp. 129-130). Grand narratives like 'progress' and 'the divine' may have ended, but neoliberalism strives to replace them with narratives that offer a view of the world and of our relation to others that aid its (neoliberalism's) reproduction. Therefore, I consider important that we both question the narratives by which we live and, following Žižek's thinking, that we have symbolic narratives (2010, p. 184) – for example, narratives of equality and justice, narratives concerning the world we want to live in and the kind of relationships we want to have with others – so that we can make these narratives a material reality.

SO WHAT NOW (IN POLITICS)?

What is one to do within this economy then? Across Europe and the US, some, as also seen by the reactions to the possibility of a left wing government being elected in Greece in the upcoming (25 January 2015) elections, want to maintain the current economic system, claiming that the problem is only managing the crisis by implementing certain policies and imposing further measures (see, for example, Antonis Samaras cited in Smith, 2014 and Angela Merkel cited in Inman, 2014). Others believe that fundamental changes need to be made for a Europe of equality and justice (see, for example, Žižek, 2015 and Acocella et al., 2015). I also believe that the latter is required. I therefore turn to people that share similar ideas.

Slavoj Žižek, an important influence on this thesis, insists that capitalism is simply not a realistic scenario for the future and proposes that it is to art and social movements that we should look in order to replace the current system with a new one (2010, p. 365).⁶ Although Žižek believes that change is necessary, he articulates why, despite the fact that we might want to change things, we often continue to reproduce them. He locates the reason for this in the relationship between power and ‘object-cause of desire’:

The question to be raised concerns *power (domination) and the unconscious*: how does power work, why do its subjects obey it? This brings us to the (misleadingly named) ‘erotics of power’: subjects obey not only because of physical coercion (or the threat of it) and ideological mystification, but because they have a libidinal investment in power. The ultimate ‘cause’ of power is the *object a*, the object-cause of desire, the

⁶ Žižek argues that ‘the true utopia is the belief that the existing global system can reproduce itself indefinitely’ (2010, p. 363). He believes that ‘the only way to be truly “realistic” is to think what, within the coordinates of this system cannot but appear as impossible. How are we to prepare for this radical change, to lay the foundations for it?’ (ibid.). He suggests that ‘[t]he least we can do is to look for traces of the new communist collective in already existing social or even artistic movements. What is therefore needed today is a refined search for “signs coming from the future” for indications of this radical questioning of the system’ (ibid.).

surplus-enjoyment by means of which power 'bribes' those it holds in its sway. This *object a* is given the form in the (unconscious) fantasies of the subjects of power, and the function of Kadare's 'Tabir Sarraïl'⁷ is precisely to interpret those fantasies, to learn what kind of (libidinal) objects they are for their subjects. These obscure 'feedback mechanism' – between the subjects of power and its holders – regulate the subjects' subordination, such that if they are disturbed the power structure may lose its libidinal grip and dissolve (Žižek, 2010, pp. 400-401).

Žižek therefore suggests that, if we are to actually resist and actively fight for change, we need, first and foremost, to question and critique our dreams for ourselves and for the future and the actions we take towards that direction (Žižek, 2010, pp. 400-401).⁸

Because my concern in this thesis is with contemporary art's role in effecting change, I find Jodi Dean's assertions with regards to it, compared to those of Žižek, of importance to the conversation. Although, in general, there are common denominators in their thinking – for example that change is needed and that we need to question and critique how, through our specific actions, we actually struggle for change – there are some substantial differences in their practical suggestions. In her book *The Communist Horizon* (2012), Dean begins by arguing that democracy, in light of events in the last decade such as the bailing out of banks at the cost of social programmes, has proven unable to secure economic justice

⁷ Here, Žižek is referencing Ismail Kadare's book *The Palace of Dreams* ([1981] 2008, London: Vintage). The Palace of Dreams is located at the centre of a Sultan's big empire. 'Inside, the dreams of every citizen are collected, sorted and interpreted in order to identify the "master-dreams" that will provide the clues to the Empire's destiny and that of its Monarch. An entire nation's consciousness is thus meticulously laid bare and at the mercy of its government...*The Palace of Dreams* is Kadare's macabre vision of tyranny and oppression, and was banned upon publication in Albania in 1981' (from book's back cover).

⁸ Žižek suggests that 'emancipatory struggle begins with the ruthless work of self-censorship and auto-critique – not of reality, but of one's own dreams. The best way to grasp the core of the obsessive attitude is through the notion of *false activity*: you think you are active, but your true position, as embodied in the fetish, is passive' (2010, pp. 400-401).

(Dean, 2012, p. 21).⁹

Dean also criticises the manner in which we, as individuals who are part of a collective, participate in democracy. She considers the hierarchical, meta-individualist model of capitalism and traditional communism problematic. She therefore suggests that collectivity today – much like the Occupy Wall Street – needs to be characterized by ‘diversity, horizontality, individuality, inclusivity, and openness (where openness actually means the refusal of divisive ideological content)’ (Dean, 2012, p. 207). She emphasizes, however, that horizontality needs to be supplemented by vertical and diagonal strength, that the collectivity needs to ‘attune itself to the facts of leadership’ (ibid., p. 209), and trust its desire for collectivity: acknowledge that ‘autonomy is only ever a collective product, fragments are parts of ever larger wholes, and dispersion is but the flipside of concentration’ (ibid., p. 224). The relationship of the individual to the collective is an important concern of this thesis, as effecting change through art in the contemporary moment also requires a rethinking of what this relationship is and how it might be reconfigured. I take up this concern in my discussion of Tino Sehgal’s *These Associations*. For now, I would concur that the current configuration of this relationship, which prioritises the individual, has led to many of the problems in our contemporary moment both at an individual and at a systemic level.

Allow me now to consider the important differences between the thinking of Dean

⁹ Dean believes that ‘the fantasy that democracy exerts a force for economic justice has dissolved...as the US government funnels trillions of dollars to banks and the European central banks rig national governments and cut social programs in order to keep themselves afloat’ (Dean, 2012, p. 21).

and Žižek. There are two distinct differences: first, Dean considers street protest as the most effective mode of resistance.¹⁰ She believes for example that, although Occupy may use ‘communicative capitalism’s networks and screens’, the energy of the movement stems from the actions of activists in the streets (Dean, 2012, p. 216). Second, and most important to our conversation, is her stance towards the role of art. Unlike Žižek, Dean does not believe that art can help effect change. She is against the ‘postmodern pluralist approach’ as a political strategy (ibid., p. 3) and believes that ‘[t]he boundaries to what can be thought as politics in certain segments of the post-structuralist and anarchist Left only benefit capital’ (ibid., pp. 13-14). For her, the assumption of some theorists and activists that ‘micropolitical activities are more important loci of action than large-scale organized movement’ inhibits the building of ‘new types of organizations because it makes thinking in terms of collectivity rarer, harder and seemingly less “fresh”’ (ibid.). In addition, she believes that these activists’ and theorists’ treatment of artworks as holding a political potential that classes, parties and unions do not hold, creates a disconnect between politics and working people’s organised struggle, presenting politics as something spectators can simply see (ibid.).

¹⁰ Paul Rae considers Dean’s stance militant. He argues that ‘[in] spite of the weaknesses in her argument, it is logical that there can be no thoroughgoing transformation in the way the world works without a division that would see the exploited turn as one upon the exploiters...Dean’s critique of potential sympathisers is more acute than that of their shared adversaries. Deleuzian variants on post-Marxism, such as those advanced by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in *Empire* (2000) and *Multitude* (2004), have focused on qualitative accounts of socio-political transformation. Dean will have none of it. She makes the quantitative case. You need the numbers—and to the extent that they comprise a collective, you need to subordinate yourself to it. Such an option cannot be entertained without countenancing violence or the prospect of, as Dean puts it, “moralism, dogmatism, authoritarianism, and utopianism” (2012: 175). For her, the aversion of liberals and leftists to these outcomes has cost them political agency, and the resulting inability to imagine a collective response to the vicissitudes of capitalism has left them in a melancholic fug with only social media, identitarian indignation and conceptual art for solace’ (Rae, 2014, pp. 68-69).

Artistic products, whether actual commodities or commodified experiences...buttress capital as they circulate political affects while displacing political struggles from the streets to the galleries. Spectators can pay (or donate) to feel radical without having to get their hands dirty....the singular happening disconnects task from goal. Any 'sense' it makes, any meaning or relevance it has, is up to the spectator (perhaps with a bit of guidance from curators and theorists) (Dean, 2012, pp. 13-14).

So what might the role of art and the artist be in effecting change in the contemporary moment? Dean not only opens this again up to question, but also quickly closes it, arguing that art and artists can play no role in effecting change today. Artists then have two choices: either jump off the cliff or only become activists and street protesters. What are we to make of this? Žižek, on the other hand, believes that it is to art and social movements that we should look in order to replace the current system with a new one (2010, p. 365). But *what kind* of art has the potential to effect change? Is it possible to resist ethics and rationalities of the current system? Does the level of abstraction that characterises postmodern work crucially affect its potential to effect change?

SO WHAT NOW (IN ART)?

There are some questions that, the more one asks them – at different time periods, in different contexts – seem to offer/require different answers. Or do they? Perhaps the answers keep changing, because we are just not asking the 'right' questions; or because we are not posing the problem appropriately; or because there are parameters we are not considering; or the answer is contingent on the historical context, on our needs, ideas, values and current understandings. Or simply because the current socio-economic and political conditions are pressing for more specific answers.

Before starting a conversation about the kind of art that might have the potential to effect change in the contemporary moment, it must be acknowledged that many theorists and artists would agree with Jodi Dean: that art can play no role in effecting change. However, in this case it would be because these artists and theorists either do not agree that effecting change is the role of art to begin or understand 'effecting change' differently. Debates with regards to the role of art in society in relation to politics, as well as to its ability to effect change, have been and continue to be staged on several different grounds. For example, among others, they have been staged on grounds of theatricality, imitation, fiction, autonomy versus social engagement and spectacle. The debate most important to this conversation on art's role in effecting change is that on autonomous versus socially engaged art. I use Shannon Jackson's writing to frame this debate, because my thinking is closest to hers.

Shannon Jackson, in her book *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (2011), engages with this exact debate. She begins by suggesting the reasons for which 'social practice'/ 'socially engaged art' is often critiqued and often accompanied by general claims that all art is political or that there is no art 'free from social engagement' (p. 18). The first reason she offers for this, which she believes has 'spurred and stalled politicized art movement for over a century', is the problematic associations attached to the terms 'social practice' and 'socially engaged art' (ibid., pp. 18-19). On the one hand, she argues, the terms are associated with 'activist art, social work, protest performance, collaborative art, performance ethnography, community theatre, relational aesthetics, conversation pieces action research'; on the other, with 'literal art, functionalist art, dumbed

down art, social realist art, victim art, consumable art' and so forth (ibid.). However, Jackson suggests that the perceived social engagement of an artwork depends to a great extent on its medium and therefore on the 'inherited assumptions about the nature of different art forms and the social function of artistic practice' with which a viewer approaches a work (ibid.). For example, some viewers may see a work that incorporates the live body in the gallery as 'formally innovative', whereas others may not acknowledge any innovation and comment on the lack of acting skills (ibid.). Moreover, the 'theatricality' of a work may be understood differently in visual arts than in theatre, and therefore may be seen as positive or as something to be avoided. Jackson suggests that the anti-theatrical discourse has been based on different concerns for different art forms: from the perspective of theatre it has been based on concerns with artifice, as seen in Plato's *Republic*¹¹ or in J.L. Austin's 'repudiation of its "etiolated" form'; from the perspective of visual arts it has been based on concerns with duration, referentiality, literality, spectacle or spectatorial engagement, which go against visual art's simultaneity of forms and 'goals of modernist abstraction'¹² (ibid., p.

¹¹ In Book X in the *Republic*, Plato supports that he wants to forbid imitative art. The reason for Plato's rejection is twofold: firstly, because these works are 'thrice removed from reality' (599a): they are imitations of things in nature (a painter paints a bed) which are themselves imitations of Ideas in the world of Ideas (the bed is an instance of the Idea bed). Plato believes that if the aim of humans is the pursuit of Ideas, then imitative art, because it brings attention to objects instead, becomes an obstacle, a distraction. Secondly, Plato argues that poetic imitations affect our emotions/passions, nurturing them and affecting the balance between them and reason, which should be the ruler of our actions (606d). However, Aristotle and Freud feel differently. As Jonas Barish observes, both Aristotle and Freud 'see the release of irrational impulses as therapeutic, whereas for Plato it means the dangerous raking up of feelings that might better be suppressed'. Aristotle is not opposed to imitation and finds its educational process of value (1981, p. 29).

¹² Modernist critics Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried advocated that a modernist painting's aim is the aesthetic autonomy that resulted from the work's inquiry into its own medium: 'The arts could save themselves from [post-Enlightenment] leveling down only by demonstrating that the kind of experience they provided was valuable in its own right and not to be obtained by any other kind of activity' (Greenberg, 1973, p. 68). It is only with minimalism – an artistic movement that pointed to the dependence of an artwork on the spectator (like Duchamp) – that movements such as institutional critique – which

20). Jackson believes that the 'intelligibility, accessibility, form, materiality, collectivity, activism duration, and even artfulness in the analysis of socially engaged art', depends a great deal on our perspective as viewers from the theatre, visual arts or performance studies – a newer field that is open to cross-media experimentation (ibid., p. 19). More recently, for example, theatre and performance studies scholar Joe Kelleher argued that theatre's political potential emerges from "its seeming fragility and tendency to *untruth*" rather than from the strength of its representations and the justice of its political "messages" (Kelleher, 2013, p. 43). Kelleher thus, perceives the constructedness of theatre as its political offering and strength.

Secondly, Jackson views the critique of the terms 'social practice' and 'socially engaged art' and the argument *against* social art and *for* art's autonomy as the result of the mistrust of 'the system' as associated with the State: a mistrust that has its roots in the socialist (pre-1989) era, where the bureaucracy of social structures was thought to constrain human beings through regulations and 'institutions were not to be trusted' (2011, pp. 23-24). She believes that this 'generalised critique of system' and the equation of freedom with 'systemic independence' did not only permeate neoliberal policy circles, but also those of avant-garde artists and intellectuals (ibid.).

However, despite critiques of 'socially engaged' art, it has been argued that a 'social turn' has occurred in contemporary art. Art historian and critic Claire Bishop (2006), in her article in *Artforum*, initially spoke of a 'social turn' of art, locating it

advocated the artworks dependence on 'the economic and social infrastructures of the museum itself' – developed (Jackson, 2011, p. 25). For this reason, Jackson believes that '[t]he turn to the social...proceeds from a formal questioning of artistic form and its embedded support systems' (p. 44).

in the 1990s. More recently, she has proposed that the 'social turn' should be 'positioned more accurately as a *return* to the social, part of an ongoing history of attempts to rethink art collectively' (2012b, p. 3). I will return to Bishop momentarily, but I should clarify here that when Bishop uses the phrase 'the social turn in contemporary art' she speaks from the perspective of visual arts, whereas I speak from the perspective of performance. However, the object of analysis, the artworks that she discusses, are quite often what someone from a theatre or performance perspective would consider performances because of their use of the live body.¹³ In addition, when I use the term contemporary art, I refer to the experimental practices of artists from different disciplines (visual art, theatre, dance and performance), who embrace interdisciplinarity and are interested in their work being, in different ways, socially engaged – something I will elaborate further on in due course.

Jackson nuances Bishop's (2006) argument regarding the 'social turn' in contemporary art by suggesting that what we refer to as the 'social turn' in art is immediately related to cross-media experimentations: a visual artist, for example, whose material is the spectators (conventionally the material of a theatre or dance

¹³ It should be noted, however, that some theorists make distinctions between the performances made by visual artists and those made by performance artists. For example, Andy Horwitz, critic, curator, cultural producer and founder of the art and performance website *Culturebot*, offers a differentiation between 'visual art performance' and 'contemporary performance' (2011). He argues that 'visual art performance, generally, is predicated on the objectification and abstraction of the human body' (ibid.). However, he considers that 'contemporary performance – Time-Based Art with its origins in dance and theater – is more frequently predicated on the creation of a subjective field of experience – what I will call "experience design"' (ibid.). He believes that the difference is in their different aims: to create a 'living object' versus 'a shared experience' (ibid.). With contemporary performance, Horwitz argues, '[t]he aesthetic challenges of integrating light, sound, visual representation and embodied presence – sometimes even text – into a Gesamtkunstwerk are undertaken not to create a "living object" but to create a shared experience' (ibid.).

maker) and whose artwork involves the spectators having dinner with him/her in a gallery space, is not only challenging our understanding of what lies within the specific art field, but also our understandings of the boundaries between art and the social in every day life; it challenges both what lies within and outside a medium, but also what lies within and outside art (2011, p. 28).

But let us examine the roots of the argument for the 'social turn in contemporary art'. This takes us to a conversation that developed among theorists and is of importance to this thesis's concern with the potential of contemporary art to effect change. The conversation I am referring to has its roots in curator Nicolas Bourriaud's views in his book *Relational Aesthetics* ([1998] 2002). It is with his views that other scholars, theorists and critics such as Claire Bishop, Shannon Jackson, Jeremy Gilbert and Jen Harvie, among others, have since engaged.

Bourriaud maps his perspective on the role of art onto Jean-François thinking on post-modern architecture (1992), which Lyotard believes "is condemned to create a series of minor modifications in a space whose modernity it inherits, and abandon an overall reconstruction of the space inhabited by humankind" (Lyotard cited in Bourriaud, p. 13). Here Bourriaud modifies Lyotard's 'condemned' to 'chance': the artists have the chance to '*lear[n] to inhabit the world in a better way*, instead of trying to construct it based on a preconceive idea of historical evolution' (Bourriaud, p. 13). Bourriaud believes that art can play a political role by not imagining realities and gesturing towards them through the artwork, but by actually constructing realities and models of action. He therefore advocates for an art that takes 'its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social

context, rather th[a]n the assertion of an independent and *private* symbolic space' (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 14). He calls this art *relational*.¹⁴

Bourriaud considers exhibition spaces the best place to create 'relational art'. He believes this to be the case, because, unlike TV, literature and the theatre, exhibition spaces '*tighten the space of relations*' by allowing interaction and conversation during the viewing of the work (2002, pp. 15-16). As an example of the kind of art Bourriaud is talking about – one that is characterised by 'relational aesthetics' – he offers Rirkrit Tiravanija's much discussed installation work, which involved converting a gallery space into a kitchen in which he offered a (free) meal to visitors. Bourriaud believes that these pieces challenge two things. First, they challenge what we consider as sculpture, installation, performance or social activism, because the work crosses media boundaries (2002, p. 25). Second, they challenge what we consider the boundary between life and art, because they create a conviviality, the product of which is not the representation of 'angelic worlds, but of producing the conditions thereof' (ibid., p. 83). Bourriaud, in other words, finds in such works the potential for the exploration of a different kind of sociality, one that enables exchanges that we could repeat on the outside-of-the-frame-of-the-artwork world.

Claire Bishop has critiqued Bourriaud's proposition for 'relational aesthetics'. She argues that these aesthetics do not enable antagonism and conflict, because the

¹⁴ Bourriaud proposes that 'the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities [realities], but to *actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real*, whatever the scale chosen by the artist....There is nothing more absurd either [other] than the assertion that contemporary art does not involve any political project, or than the claim that its subversive aspects are not based on any theoretical terrain....The possibility for a *relational* art...points to a radical upheaval of the aesthetic, cultural and political goals introduced by modern art' (Bourriaud, 2002, pp. 13-14, my emphasis).

audience in these works 'is envisaged as a community' (2004, p. 54). She believes that, instead of creating an 'one-to-one relationship between work of art and viewer', relational aesthetics artwork 'sets up situations in which viewers are not just addressed as a collective, social entity, but are actually given the wherewithal to create a community, however temporary or utopian this may be' (ibid.) For Bishop, antagonism and conflict are crucial for democracy and 'relational aesthetics' rob artworks of the opportunity for any examination and exploration of conflict.

Entering the Bourriaud-Bishop debate, political and cultural theorist Jeremy Gilbert agrees with Bishop in so far as that these works have a tendency to turn into 'meta-individualistic celebrations of "community"' (or to 'banal and depoliticised assertions of relationality as a general social fact'), which neglect to consider relations of power and miss the chance to explore 'the complexity and undecidable potential of infinite relationality' (2014, p. 188). However, Gilbert believes that the kind of work that Bourriaud proposes, 'by merely asserting the creative potency of sociality against neoliberalism's insistence on its impotence' succeeds in 'enact[ing] its own antagonism to neoliberal post-democracy' (ibid., p. 190). At the same time, he cautions us that even the most radical artworks ('shaped by the most radical philosophical developments...and committed to the radical pluralism of the post-1968 New Left') must always 'think politics *strategically*': they should not remain "'tactical" interventions which simply have no social or political effect', but have a "'strategic orientation" to the outside and to the future' (ibid., pp. 190-191). Gilbert here seems initially to be *for* collapsing the social and the aesthetic for social change. A few pages later, though, he recognises the importance and contribution of small acts to social change even when not

explicitly political (ibid., p. 201).¹⁵ He advocates that change ‘can only come about as the result of a complex distribution and aggregation of forces’ and not as a result of any single act, process, tendency, project or organisation (ibid., p. 203).

Whereas Gilbert recognises the social impact of art, Claire Bishop, believes that the aesthetic, the social/political and ethics should not collapse and sets up her argument by presenting the positions of Felix Guattari and Jacques Rancière. She believes that, for Guattari, it is important that art did not blur into life:

[T]he ethico-aesthetic paradigm involves overthrowing current forms of art as much as current forms of social life [Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, 1995, p. 134]. It does not denote an aestheticisation of the social or a complete dissolution of disciplinary boundaries. Rather, the war is to be waged on two fronts: as a critique of art, and as a critique of the institutions into which it permeates, because art blurring entirely into life risks ‘the perennial possibility of eclipse’ [p. 130]. To protect against this threat of art’s self-extinction, Guattari suggests that each work of art must have a ‘double finality’: ‘[Firstly] to insert itself into a social network which will either appropriate or reject it, and [secondly] to celebrate, once again, the Universe of art as such, precisely because it is always in danger of collapsing’ [p. 131]. Guattari’s language of a double finality speaks to the double ontology of cross-disciplinary projects we are so frequently presented with today, preeminently among them art-as-pedagogy. Like all long-term participatory projects, this art...needs to be successful within both art and the social field, but ideally also testing and revising the criteria we apply to both domains. Without this double finality, such projects risk becoming ‘edu-tainment’ or ‘pedagogical aesthetics’ (Bishop, 2012b, pp. 273-274).

Bishop here, despite the fact that she acknowledges the importance of a critique of art and of institutions, nevertheless presents them as separate. She suggests moreover that Rancière arrives at the same conclusion with her from a different point of departure when he advocates for a mediating object, a distance between

¹⁵ Gilbert here echoes Marxist geographer David Harvey’s suggestion that ‘[a] political movement can start anywhere (in labour processes, around mental conceptions, in the relation to nature, in social relations, in the design of revolutionary technologies and organisational forms, out of daily life or through attempts to reform institutional and administrative structures including the reconfiguration of state powers). The trick is to keep the political movement moving from one sphere of activity to another in mutually reinforcing ways. This was how capitalism arose out of feudalism and this is how something radically different...must arise out of capitalism’ (Harvey, 2010, p. 228).

the concept of the artist and the spectator's interpretation of the artwork:

This spectacle is a third term, to which the other two can refer, but which prevents any kind of "equal" or "undistorted" transmission. It is a mediation between them, and that mediation of a third term is crucial in the process of intellectual emancipation [...] The same thing that links them must also separate them (Rancière, 2007, p. 278).¹⁶

Bishop holds the opinion that for Guattari as well as for Rancière, 'art and the social are not to be reconciled, but sustained in continual tension' (Bishop, 2012b, p. 278). She believes that that participatory art should not be viewed as 'an automatic formula for political art', but instead as one of the strategies that can be used to specific ends (ibid., p. 283). Her account of the relationship between art and politics across time and her articulation of the problem in the manner in which we consider art today and the responsibility we place on it are important to Jackson's interjections (both to the one offered earlier on the associations with 'socially engaged art' as a result of a mistrust of socialist (pre-1989) structures and to her critique of Bishop's views here).

Bishop argues that at a certain point, if art is to contribute to social change, it must 'hand over to other institutions' (Bishop, 2012b, p. 284). She confirms Jackson's position that a critique of 'socially engaged art' derives from a mistrust of socialist (pre-1989) structures, and suggests why contemporary artists, unlike the historic avant-garde, feel the pressure to create political work.

The historic avant-garde was always positioned in relation to an existent party politics (primarily communist) which removed the pressure of art ever being required to effectuate change in and of itself... the post-war avant-gardes claimed open-endedness as a radical refusal of organised politics – be this inter-war totalitarianism or the dogma of a party line (Bishop, 2012b, pp. 283-284).

¹⁶ It is this 'third thing' that theatre theorist Lara Stevens also believes 'accommodates a plurality of responses from spectators that have the potential to manifest later in unexpected and unmeasurable attitudes and actions in real world civic engagement outside the theatre' (Stevens, 2014, p. 36).

Bishop believes that the latter allowed for the opportunity to 'discover the highest artistic intensity in the everyday and the banal, which would serve a larger project of equality and anti-elitism' (2012b, pp. 283-284). The problem she identifies with artists since the 1990s is that because they are not working in 'relation to an existing political project (only to a loosely defined anti-capitalism)', they feel that they have to carry 'the burden of devising new models of social and political organisation', a task she believes they are not 'always best equipped to undertake' and therefore often create work that lacks 'both a social and an artistic target' (ibid.). It is interesting here that Bishop assumes that a political project needs to be clearly defined and shared among artists for social/political work to be made, and also assumes that artists think that, by making such a work, they will directly and single-handedly effect change. She makes the further assumption that 'devising new models of social and political organisation' (ibid.) should be left to experts, as though it is not political and economic experts that have played a major role in the current socioeconomic problems. Finally, Bishop advocates for arts autonomy, considering aesthetic and social engagement as irreconcilable. She does not acknowledge that art can contribute in any way to the production of 'an international alignment of leftist political movements' (ibid.). She argues that:

Rather than addressing this by collapsing art and ethics together, the task today is to produce a viable international alignment of leftist political movements and a reassertion of art's inventive forms of negation as valuable in their own right. We need to recognise art as a form of experimental activity overlapping with the world, whose negativity may lend support towards a political project (without bearing the sole responsibility for devising and implementing it) (Bishop, 2012b, pp. 283-284).

Shannon Jackson (2011) critiques Bishop's views, although her critique is based on earlier iterations (*October's* 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics', 2004 and

Artforum's 'The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents', 2006) of the arguments put forth by Bishop in *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (2012b). Jackson first addresses Bourriaud's views citing an excerpt from *Relational Aesthetics* ([1998] 2002) that illustrates his emphasis on art's creation of 'inter-subjective exchange' (Jackson, 2011, p. 45): '[p]roducing a form is to invent possible encounters; receiving a form is to create the conditions for an exchange, the way you return a service in a game of tennis' (Bourriaud, ([1998] 2002. p. 23). She argues that, whereas Levinas's ethical paradigm emphasises the responsibility we have towards Others, 'a relationality with an Other that we do not chose, one to which we must respond and whose claims are not alterable by us', Bourriaud instead advocates for a relationality that is 'perpetually revisable' (Jackson, 2011, p. 46). She suggests that what Bourriaud does not consider here is that his game of tennis can only 'occur with other responsible parties': whether that is the crew of ball boys or any others that make this game possible (ibid.).

Jackson's biggest objections, though, are with Bishop's (2004, 2006) arguments (arguments that remain consistent in her conclusions in *Artificial Hells* – Bishop, 2012b). Jackson believes that Bishop's advocating for 'antagonism' in art means that she advocates for art that maintains a criticality and resists intelligibility, which Bishop believes lose their potency when art attempts to be socially ameliorative. Jackson begins by, first, finding inconsistencies in Bishop's (2004) own argument and in the artworks Bishop offers as bad examples because they fall into either side of the binary she (Bishop) constructs: 'feel-good' works (which 'risk neutralizing the capacity for critical reflection') and 'do-good' works (which 'risk becoming overly instrumentalized, banalizing the formal complexities and

interrogative possibilities of art under the homogenizing umbrella of social good') (Jackson, 2011, p. 47).¹⁷ Second, Jackson argues that, by invoking and citing Ernesto Laclau's and Chantal Mouffe's work 'on the necessity of antagonizing boundaries within and between large-scale and small-scale social sectors', but also aligning such views on antagonism with Jacques Rancière's language of 'rupture',¹⁸ Bishop ends up 'equating (post-)socialist theories of antagonism and rupture with the felt discomfort of a spectator's encounter with appropriately edgy art material' (Jackson, 2001, p. 48). Third, she observes that the connections Bishop draws with

¹⁷ Art critic, media theorist, and philosopher Boris Groys also observes the problems with contemporary art criticism. He argues that contemporary art is both celebrated when its ethics is in the right place – when it attempts to 'change the dominant social and political conditions, to make the world a better place' – and criticised when its 'attempts to transcend the art system' do not 'lead beyond the aesthetic sphere: instead of changing the world, art only makes it look better' (Groys, 2010, p. 39). He considers that the problem is not 'art's capacity to become truly political' (the 'politicization of art') – he claims that art has 'entered the political sphere... many times in the twentieth century' – but that the 'political sphere has already become aestheticized. When art becomes political, it is forced to make the unpleasant discovery that politics has already become art—that politics has already situated itself in the aesthetic field' (ibid). Considering the artistic installation as the one having the most potential to be political and echoing Rancière's thinking on art making the invisible visible (Rancière, 2010), Groys argues that '[t]he goal of art, after all, is not to change things— things are changing by themselves all the time anyway. Art's function is rather to show, to make visible the realities that are generally overlooked... reveal[] the hidden sovereign dimension of the contemporary democratic order that politics, for the most part, tries to conceal. The installation space is where we are immediately confronted with the ambiguous character of the contemporary notion of freedom that functions in our democracies as a tension between sovereign and institutional freedom. The artistic installation is thus a space of unconcealment (in the Heideggerian sense) of the heterotopic, sovereign power that is concealed behind the obscure transparency of the democratic order' (Groys, 2010, p. 69).

¹⁸ Rancière notes that '[w]ithin any given framework [whether the theatre, the museum or the book], artists are those whose strategies aim to change the frames, speeds and scales according to which we perceive the visible, and combine it with a specific invisible element and a specific meaning. Such strategies are intended to make the invisible visible or to question the self-evidence of the visible; to rupture given relations between things and meanings and, inversely, to invent novel relationships between things and meanings that were previously unrelated. This might be called the labour of fiction, which, in my view, is a word that we need to re-conceive. "Fiction", as re-framed by the aesthetic regime of art, means far more than the constructing of an imaginary world, and even far more than its Aristotelian sense as "arrangement of actions". It is not a term that designates the imaginary as opposed to the real; it involves the re-framing of the "real", or the framing of a dissensus. Fiction is a way of changing existing modes of sensory presentations and forms of enunciation; of varying frames, scales and rhythms; and of building new relationships between reality and appearance, the individual and the collective' (2010, p. 141).

Laclau's and Mouffe's work, as well as with Rancière's are problematic to begin with. With regards to Laclau and Mouffe (whose work *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1995) was 'a response to the conservative and economic social developments that would underwrite neoliberalism'), this is because with their use of the term 'antagonism', they sought to emphasise not 'a relation among objective forces', like two cars that crash, but to point to 'antagonism' as a relation that exposes "'the limits of the social...[society's] impossibility of fully constituting itself"' (Jackson, 2011, pp. 50-51). Fourth, Jackson argues that Bishop creates binary oppositions and gives prescriptions about what art should do, whereas Rancière argues against binary oppositions, aesthetic divisions and categorisations (e.g. knowledge and ignorance, spectatorial passivity and activity, the 'governing and the governed'), as evidenced from his well-known texts *The Politics of Aesthetics* (2004) and 'The Emancipated Spectator' (2007) (Jackson, 2011, pp. 52-53). Jackson emphasises that Bishop, by creating an 'antimony between individual artist and social community' and 'valu[ing] "highly-authored" projects over a consensual collaboration' misses the opportunity to question formally the social role of the 'individuated author' (ibid., p. 55). Finally, Jackson argues that, although Bishop's arguments echo Adorno's views on the importance of autonomy and aesthetic commitment (Adorno was concerned with the 'intellectual closure' that a 'call for socially intelligible art' might rationalize and therefore criticised Bertolt Brecht's work as 'didactic'), her conclusions contradict an Adornian view of the role of art (Jackson, 2011, p. 49). Jackson argues that this is because Bishop ends up suggesting that artists should "'attempt to think the aesthetic and the social/political *together*, rather than subsuming both within the ethical"' (Bishop

cited in Jackson, 2011, p. 49).¹⁹ Her critique of Bishop's views closes with the following questions on the logic of these views.

By what logic are artistic autonomy and social intervention made 'contradictory' in the first place? Where have terms such as intelligibility and unintelligibility become polarized? Why is the other-directed work of social art cast as a capitulation of the 'Christian ethic of good soul' (a religious equation that is surely the fastest route to damnation in critical humanities circles)? Finally, what does it mean to reinvolve divisions between autonomy and heteronomy in a domain of practice that unsettles the discrete boundaries of the art event? (Jackson, 2011, p. 49)

Jackson here emphasises that for an artwork to be both socially and aesthetically meaningful, it does not require any collapsing of boundaries ('What if...the negotiation of an external governance can itself be conceived as part of an art project?' – 2011, p. 29). She nuances the conversation with several different arguments for and against social art, its history, different understandings and manifestations of it. She argues that 'some socially engaged art can be distinguished from other by the degree to which they provoke reflection on the contingent systems that support the management of life' (ibid., p. 29), from the manner in which it might 'provoke an awareness of our enmeshment in systems of support' such as the environmental, labour or immigration systems (ibid., p. 45).

Jen Harvie is the theatre and performance scholar who has most recently engaged with this debate. In her book, *Fair Play: Art, Performance and Neoliberalism* (2013), Harvie expresses her interest in what 'socially turned' artworks can 'offer

¹⁹ Theatre scholar Nicholas Ridout offers a different view from Bishop and Jackson, proposing a specific relationship between aesthetics, politics and ethics. He argues that '[a]esthetic experience becomes the condition of possibility for a particular kind of ethical relationship. The ethical relationship becomes, in its turn, the ground upon which political action might be attempted' (Ridout, 2009, p. 66). Ridout goes on to nuance this statement. He considers an ethical work, one that 'demand[s] a labour of critical thought for its ethical potential to be realised rather than offering within itself anything of the ethical' (ibid., p. 69). He believes then that there is nothing ethical *per se* in the work itself, but that the ethics arise through people's engagement with the work, as 'demanded' by the work's construction, which I understand to include its aesthetics and production of relationships.

contemporary social relations' (p. 1). She advocates for social engagement because she believes that people 'can benefit from being socially interdependent', especially because neoliberalism promotes individualism and entrepreneurship (ibid., p. 2). Like Bishop (2012b, p. 277), she is concerned with 'socially turned' works eventually becoming complicity with neoliberal agendas (Harvie, 2013, p. 3). For Harvie, socially engaged art and performance works are those that 'actively...engage others who are not the artists' – whether they are the spectators or 'delegated makers' like the immigrant workers that Santiago Sierra hired to execute his work – in order to 'enhance their social engagement' (ibid., p. 5). She also defines 'socially turned' works as those that do not let 'audiences contemplate in silent solitude' but 'engage audiences in active participation with an environment and/or process that compels those audiences to interact socially with each other' (ibid.). Harvie's focus in this book is to contextualise 'socially turned' practices in

broader social and material contexts in order to consider not only what kinds of opportunities for what qualitative experiences of participation the art practices 'themselves' offer audiences, but also, importantly, how those opportunities are affected by the practices' social and material contexts (2013, p. 10).

To do this, Harvie focuses on the UK context and specifically on London's and looks at art and performances that 'requir[e] its audience physically to act' (2013, p. 30). She offers examples of immersive theatre and art and one-to-one performance. In addition, she discusses art that is delegated to audiences, amateurs or experts. She argues that delegated art practices can both 'challenge social hierarchies' and 'draw attention to exploitative labour trends and other ethical implications arising from delegation' (ibid., p. 40). For example, she argues that some of these practices constitute the delegated audience members as flexible precarious workers, mimicking in this way current conditions of labour (ibid., pp. 45-46). She also looks

at the artist as entrepreneur, at cultural policy initiatives, the privatization of public space and the private and public financing of arts and their effects on art making. Through her analysis, she offers some examples of ‘artistic networks and practices of social interdependent participation, collaboration and welfare’, which, she believes, are able to resist neoliberalism’s support for and promotion of ‘self-interested individualism’ and create models of a different kind: of constructive social engagement and fairness (ibid., p. 25).

Looking from a distance

This debate, among theorists and scholars from visual art, theatre, performance and cultural studies, is based on two assumptions: first – as Shannon Jackson (2011) also points out – on the assumption of a binary opposition between art that retains its artistic autonomy (as advocated by Claire Bishop, 2012b) and art as social intervention (as suggested by Bourriaud, [1998] 2002, Gilbert, 2013 and Harvie, 2013). Second, in this debate, there is often an assumption of *what kind* of work can be considered as socially engaged: socially engaged art is often conflated with the requirement for physical participation of the spectator and/or delegated performer (as indicated by Bishop, 2012b and Harvie, 2013).

My thinking is closest to that of Jackson, who believes that the binary opposition between art that retains its artistic autonomy and art that functions as social intervention is false (Jackson, 2013, p. 49). I believe that art can be both socially and aesthetically meaningful and that is not contradictory. I also agree with Harvie with regards to the importance of social relations that artworks produce, especially in the contemporary neoliberal moment (2013, p. 2). However, as I will argue throughout this thesis, a work’s social engagement is not necessarily

predicated on physical participation, and I find important not only the social relations the work produces within itself, but the relations it produces with the several economies of which it is a part. I will argue that a work's social engagement and any potential to effect change outside the framework of the artwork lies in the *specific* economy of relations it produces within itself (the sociality the work creates through its materiality, dramaturgy and relation to the spectator) and with the economies in which it is embedded (the manner in which the artwork is critically situated in relation to its place/space of presentation, the economies of dance/theatre/art and the neoliberal capitalist economy). In addition, unlike Bourriaud, Bishop, Jackson and Harvie, who are theorists and critics, my perspective is that of an artist making work and who has made work both in the US as well as in Europe. This research project then, starts from the end of this debate. It dialogues with it from my perspective as a contemporary artist – one that works interdisciplinarily and is interested in my work's social engagement – who wants to rethink and nuance for herself through her own work and by looking at that of other artists *how* a work may have the potential to effect change in the contemporary neoliberal moment.

The contemporary moment demands of us a repetition: a rethinking, relooking, reimagining, a returning to and redefining of concepts, desires and relations. Our own practices and those we feel closest to become places where we might look to in order to rearticulate our place in the world, our relationship to multiple others, our place in and the function of current social and economic system. Can the kind of work contemporary artists Tino Sehgal, Jérôme Bel and I make and present in theatres and galleries effect change in the contemporary moment? Where does such potential lie? For this, I will attempt to rethink the relationship of art to

politics, the social and ethics. Although I realise the ambition of such a project, I want to test for myself the views of existing debates and attempt to offer a different point of view by looking at the actual making of artwork. My hope is to contribute to existing conversations by nuancing further this relationship.

WHAT NOW? THE SUBJECT OF THIS THESIS.

This thesis performs an opening up, once again, of our consideration of the role of art and the artist in relation to society within the current economy that – aware of the problematic uses of the term, and as I have tried to nuance my understanding and use of it at the beginning of this introduction – I will be referring to as ‘neoliberal capitalism’. So far, I have presented two, in some respects interrelated, occurrences that served as the particular motivations for the questions I asked and addressed in this research project: the current crisis – both social and economic – in Europe and the US and the ‘misuse’ of postmodern ambiguity and relationality when it comes to everyday life, which reproduces neoliberal ethics and rationalities. I presented the opinions of philosophers, theorists and scholars who, although generally agree on *what* needs to be done politically to effect change in our contemporary moment, they disagree on the *how* of this doing and the role that art can play in this *how*.

In this thesis, I attempt to reconfigure a relationship of art to politics, the social and ethics. I start with the questions: ‘Can the kind of work contemporary artists Tino Sehgal, Jérôme Bel and I make and present in theatres and galleries effect change in the contemporary moment? Where can the potential to effect change in, what is referred as neoliberal capitalism, might be located? What kind of artwork has the

potential to effect change?’ The task identified, then, is the need for a nuancing of the role that art can play in society through an examination of the specific relationships that artworks produce. I propose that it is the specific *economy of relations* that the artwork produces within itself (the sociality the work creates through its materiality, dramaturgy and relation to the spectator) and with the economies in which it is embedded (the manner it is critically situated in relation to its place of presentation and the economies of dance/theatre/art and neoliberal capitalism) that hold the potential for the work to effect change. In my analysis of each of Sehgal’s and Bel’s work discussed here, as well as with the making of my own work, I examine such relations. Importantly, in my examination of the economy of relations *within* these artworks, the term ‘economy’ is not used as it is commonly understood – as the system of production, distribution and consumption – and therefore, I do not focus on discussions around, for example, exploitation and (wage) labour. My use of the term ‘economy’ is instead based on its etymology: ‘house rules’ (oikonomia: οἶκος [ikos] (house) + νόμος [nomos] (rule/law)). In doing so, I seek to emphasise that the *kind* of rules by which an artwork functions can reproduce those of neoliberal capitalism (for example, the emphasis on the individual, self-care and self-reliance) or suggest other kinds of rules by which we can relate, work and live with one another. As I suggest at the beginning of Section II (‘Inter-Vention’ 3: On Ethics and Economy) by redefining the term ‘economy’ itself as ‘support of “the other”’, ‘houses’ – whether artworks or the larger society – will function better if we relate to one another according to rules that aim at the support of others and the recognition of the necessity of both solidarity and negotiation with others. I argue that it is upon these ‘house rules’ that *ethical relations* – and what I later define as *ethical encounters* – can be based, and it is these ethical relations I seek in the artwork considered. The discussion

below of the content of each chapter of this thesis, traces my thinking and its development across the pages that follow.

Section I attempts to rethink the relationship between art, politics and the social within the current economy. It begins with 'Inter-Vention' 1: *Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality – A Lecture-Performance*. This first practice work of this research project aims at two things. First, it aims at presenting the kind of thinking and making this project began with: a) a belief in the importance of the questioning and examination of the narratives by which we live and in systems as having the potential to reveal the assumptions upon which they are built (Kershaw, 2007); b) the making of work that therefore uses systems that reveal the work's construction to the spectator and gestures towards the examination of ideological, economic and value systems in a larger scale; and c) the belief in the importance of questioning the relationship artworks create with the spectator and with the economies in which they are embedded. Second, this 'intervention' aims at presenting the questions arising from my practice at the time, which later became the basis for this PhD project.

The subsequent two chapters examine the work of Tino Sehgal. Chapter 1 carries the questions that arose from 'Inter-Vention' 1 forward, focusing on Sehgal's work *Ann Lee* (2011, Manchester International Festival), which I encountered as a spectator. In this chapter, I examine the economy of relations of the work within the economies of the museum and neoliberal capitalism, both of which promote the importance of objects. I suggest that, despite Sehgal's claim to the 'immateriality' of his work, the work is in the end 'material', because it produces social relationships: material things that affect the way we think about and act in

the world. I argue, however, that it is not only important that the work points to the importance of relationships, but that what is crucial is the *kind* of relationships that artworks produce.

In Chapter 2 then, I examine the kind of relations Sehgal's work *These Associations* (2012, Tate Modern), which I encountered as a performer/participant and as a spectator, produced both within and outside the work. I examine the economy of relations within the work and of the work to the museum and neoliberal capitalism from my position of both a participant in and spectator of the work. I argue that the work's resistance to neoliberalism and its potential to effect change outside the frame of the artwork evaporated, because the work, soon after its opening, ruptured the sociality upon which it and its philosophy were based. The effect of this was a rupture of the promises that the work made and therefore of trust, which in turn led to the rupture of its resistance to neoliberalism's production of the social.

Section I closes with *Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?* ('Inter-Vention' 2), which was created to address the issues I identified with Sehgal's work. It is therefore concerned with: a) the creation of an economy of relations within the work – a sociality – that was based on trust and on a system that revealed its construction and could be questioned and changed by the participants/spectators and b) the questioning through the artwork of the function of the current economy in which it was embedded. This work raised questions about the necessity of making activist or explicitly political work; questions about where the radicality and the potential of an artwork to effect change might lie; questions about the ethical position of the producer; and questions about what economy of relations

within the artwork can effect change in our contemporary moment. It is these questions that I take into consideration in my discussion of Bel's work in Section II.

Mirroring the previous section, Section II comprises a discussion of two works by Jérôme Bel and two of my practice works ('Inter-Ventions' 4 and 5). However, because Section II attempts to connect the relationship drawn in Section I between art, politics and the social within the current economy to *ethics*, I begin with an 'inter-vention' of a different kind. Unlike the previous 'inter-ventions', which involved practical works, 'Inter-Vention' 3: On Ethics and Economy is a theoretical manoeuvre. Having observed how the economy of relations both in Sehgal's *These Associations* and my work *Talking with Strangers: What is violence?* affected each work's production of what I referred to as 'ethical encounters', I go on to further examine the connection between the terms 'economy' and 'ethics'. In *On Ethics and Economy*, I suggest that the relationship between the two terms is concomitant and examine the changing ethics attached to 'economy' since the term's inception in ancient Greece. Disagreeing with the ethics upon which the current economy is based, I suggest the redefinition of the term 'economy' itself. I draw on a definition of the term from the Byzantine era and redefine 'economy' as 'support of "the other"' (where 'support' can also mean disagreement, questioning, resistance and so forth), pointing to an ethics of care, support and justice. I propose that this redefinition might help us look at how artworks, as economies in themselves, can contribute to rethinking and intervening in the conceptualisation and function of the larger economy. It is with this redefinition in mind and the questions raised by Section I that I approach the work of Bel.

I approach Bel's work then within the framework of economy. Chapter 3 introduces his work and examines the ill-defined and contested economy of contemporary dance in which he makes work. I argue that Bel's work is most productively read through the lens of economy, for the term reveals most strikingly how elements in the work are layered, the work's production of economies of thought, interaction and encounter and how the work is complicit, resists or reveals the economies in which it is embedded: the theatre, contemporary dance and neoliberal capitalist economy.

Chapter 4 is comprised of three parts: the first looks at Bel's work *Veronique Doisneau* (2004), examining the economy of relations within the work and its relation to its context: the specific theatre, city and economy of its presentation – the contemporary dance and ballet economy. It argues that the work's importance lies in the affect it produces, which has the potential to affect further action and therefore effect change in the dance economy. The examination of *Veronique Doisneau*, as well as the making and presentation of my work *Martyro* ('Intervention' 4), which is located within this chapter, point to how an artwork can critique the economy/space of its presentation, but also the importance of affect as a way to empower bodies and affect further action. The second part of this chapter looks at Bel's *The Show Must Go On* (2001). I examine the sociality and affect afforded by the work through the economy of relations it produces within itself and with the theatre, dance and neoliberal economy. I argue that the work's potential emerges from its own construction and the sociality it affords: from the affect that the work produces and the construction of 'spaces of decision' and 'creative possibility'. In the third part of Chapter 4, questioning Bel's role as a producer in neoliberal capitalism and with my redefinition of 'economy' in mind, I

argue that his work resists this economy and ‘supports “the other”’ through the manner he produces the social, which in turn produces *ethical encounters*. By an ethical encounter I refer to a Levinasian encounter that recognises fully the alterity of the other and the ethical responsibility towards her in non-reciprocal terms (Levinas, 1969), but which also recognises that, although this distance to the other(s) exists, the other(s) is(are) connected to the ‘I’ by relations to the world, by an inescapable and always present sociality. Through a comparison of the space of the theatre to that of the museum, the examination of Bel’s work also reveals that the theatre, when critiqued in the manner of Bel, is an important place of presentation in our contemporary moment due its specific conditions of time and space, which allow us to be in the same space and time and pay attention to the same thing, take time to think, reconsider and act. Bel, I suggest, proposes a practice of thinking, relation and action that democratic institutions should be informed by, enable and repeat.

The creation of *IDEA: THIS IS GOOD* (‘Inter-Vention’ 5) takes into consideration the conclusions drawn from Bel’s work and the thinking, making, and writing thus far in the thesis. Using the redefinition of economy as ‘support of “the other”’, it attempts to create, in the space of the gallery, conditions similar to that of the theatre and a space of decision, affect and creative possibility: a space of ‘joyous affect’; one where spectators support each other and the work by engaging with it; and a space where they need to work together in time and space, trust one another, question the ideas and values proposed by the artwork, make decisions and act on them.

In the Epilogue, I review the development of the argument of the thesis and provide final thoughts in response to the questions with which this research project began.

**HOW TO READ THIS THESIS:
METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS, THE FUNCTION OF DIFFERENT TEXTS
& THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRACTICES**

The outline provided above offers the order in which things appear in the thesis, as well as a sense of the development of the argument. Here, I would like to nuance this outline by offering some of the ‘hows’ of this thesis. First, I would like to note that it is important that the thesis is read conventionally – from beginning to end – as it traces the line of thinking and the argument that develops from one text to the next. Second, I would like to address the role of the methodology used for this research project. For the writing of this work, not unlike most PhDs of this kind (interdisciplinary and practice-based PhDs), I used the following methods:

1) I consulted literature that I was interested in and which was relevant to the questions of the research and to the case studies I examined. This included critical texts from visual art, theatre, dance and performance studies theory and history, from philosophy, critical theory, cultural studies, political economy and sociology. Some of these texts have been addressed in this introduction, while others appear throughout the thesis.

2) I examined two case studies that were relevant to my questions and had affinities with my own practice as a performance maker and choreographer (I will further elaborate on this shortly): Tino Sehgal and Jérôme Bel. My examination of

the work of these artists involved the viewing of the work live and/or recorded, participating in the making and presentation of Sehgal's work *Theses Associations* (2012) and reviewing literature on both artists' work, including articles, books and reviews.

3) I created four works through which I asked questions pertinent to the ones of the thesis and/or to the case studies I examined, and presented them in theatres, galleries and studio spaces.

The argument of this thesis is not supported by a series of factors supported by evidence. It is instead supported by several manoeuvres. I go where the line of thinking developed from the previous text takes me, often turning sideways to look at a concern from different angles. Importantly, the role of the writing on Sehgal's and Bel's work and that on my practice is different: the chapters on Sehgal and Bel serve as arguments, whereas my practice works serve as experiments. Allow me to elaborate some on the different function of the writing on Sehgal and Bel compared to that on my practice.

On the writing on Sehgal's and Bel's work

The examination of the work of the two artists is multifaceted. I look at the works as a spectator, performer and writer of this thesis, zooming in and out on them depending on my role and the manoeuvring they afford. I treat each of Sehgal's and Bel's works as a gift that I unwrap: I look at the materiality and dramaturgy of each work, what the work offers in terms of ideas (i.e. what it points to, its theoretical references and critical texts it draws on and those that the work allows me to

engage with) and how I am directed as a spectator and/or participant. In other words, I zoom in to examine the economy of relations within the work: the thinking and relationships it affords and the relations it produces. Zooming out again, I look at how the work relates to other economies: its place of presentation (the theatre or the museum) and the economies of theatre, dance, art and neoliberal economy in which each is embedded. I ask of these works questions that concern the thesis, but also questions that arise from my practice and from the development of the argument until that point.

I begin the discussion on each work by describing (and reflecting) on the work as a spectator. However, as you will notice, my description of (almost) every work uses different pronouns. The work that I engage with first in the thesis is Sehgal's *Ann Lee*. Here I begin with the pronoun 'I' (i.e. 'I enter the space...'). With *These Associations* I use the pronoun 'you' (i.e. 'You enter Tate Modern...'), whereas with both Bel's works – *Veronique Doisneau* and *The Show Must Go On* – I move from the 'we' (i.e. 'We hear Doisneau humming...' and 'We enter...the theatre') to the 'I' (i.e. 'I keep thinking...' and 'I am remembering...'). This movement from the 'I' to the 'you' to the 'we-I' is intentional. With this choice I aim at already establishing for the reader the relations that I go on to argue the work created with the spectator (as I experienced the works). By using, for example, 'you' in *These Associations*, I want to draw attention to the fact that the work's sociality in the collective of participants it created emphasised, in the end, the individual instead of her in relation to the collective (which was the work's concern). In contrast, by moving between the 'we' and the 'I' in the writing on Bel's works, I want to point to their address of the spectator as an individual who is part of a collective of individuals. I hope that you, the reader, experience these differences.

On the writing of my practice

The discussion of my practice is dispersed throughout the thesis. I refer to each work as an 'Inter-Vention'. I use this term as the Latin origin of the verb 'intervene' (*intervenire*) indicates (*Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2014b): as 'a coming in between'. Each of the practice works then functions as 'a coming in between' ideas and practices proposed by other authors, by artists Sehgal and Bel, as well as by the economies in which the work is presented. The spatial 'in betweenness' of each work (its situating in between other texts) serves to question, comment on or further a proposition or an issue arising from the work of other authors or artists or from the context of its presentation: I see where I stand in relation to the thesis argument, to the ideas offered or afforded by Sehgal's or Bel's work and to the economies of my work's presentation and 'do' something in relation to them. I ask questions that I believe need to be asked and discussed. I do so through the work's construction and its situating in a certain manner in specific economies. The practice works, then, are experimental acts that relate to the PhD thesis via the questions I ask through them. The gap between the making and the writing is bridged by 'the thought that connects them' (Heathfield, 2011) – there is no attempt to prove these different forms of articulation (the making and the writing) through one another.

Importantly, because these works are made because of and in relation to specific economies and often upon invitation to 'inter-vene' in them, they are not presented live as part of this PhD. One, therefore, had to be there: had to see and experience the work in very specific contexts. However, the works can be accessed through the writing that appears within this thesis, the documentation that accompanies the writing and the *Appendices* located at the end of the thesis.

This multi-modal research approach – using different forms of articulation such as making, reading, performing, observing, analysing, theorising and writing – has enabled me to approach the concerns of this project from multiple positions: that of the maker, the performer, the spectator and the writer, each allowing me to zoom in and out of the works and ask questions from different perspectives. Although an argument can be made that some of the concerns of this research project could have been interrogated with non-artistic case studies, art is the economy in which I work and which I believe has an important role to play in effecting change in the contemporary moment.

A Few Words on the Relationship Between the Three Different Artistic Practices Before we Begin

As I will discuss in detail, Tino Sehgal's work critiques the museum and its materiality, the production of objects instead of time and attention, whereas Jérôme Bel's work critiques spectacle, representation, dance and the theatre as an institution. My work starts with a critique of narrativity that develops into an interest in systems as a way to undermine narrative and expose the work's construction to the spectator. This interest expands to systems outside the work. More specifically, my work becomes concerned with the economies of thought, interaction and encounter it produces, whether within the work or due to the work in its relationship with the economies with which it comes into contact. My particular interest is not always in the immediate context of the work's presentation, but its position within larger economies – that of art, culture and the larger economy. My work – with the exception of *IDEA: THIS IS GOOD* ('Intervention' 5) – is therefore not context-dependent in the manner of Sehgal and Bel's

work; it does not *per se* critique the institution (i.e. the theatre, the museum) in which it is presented, but is in dialogue with a critique already made in relation to them and it is presented in the economy the work tries to 'inter-vene'.

In addition, unlike Sehgal and Bel, I am not a well-known artist. I have not received big commissions to make work, nor does my work have always the same format: it can take the form of performance, lecture-performance, installation performance or installation and be presented in theatres or galleries. Compared to Sehgal and Bel, I am more of a guerilla figure: the format of the work I made depends on the idea I am developing and I present it where I think that it can 'inter-vene' in some way in the economies it is presented. This gives me a certain freedom, but also, due to my work's lack of strong signature and financial support, it makes the fragility of my work strongly felt. For this reason, I do not discuss my own signature circulation in the manner I discuss that of Sehgal and Bel.

Furthermore, whereas Bel's work is primarily influenced by French philosophy and linguistics (e.g. Roland Barthes and Guy Debord) and Sehgal's by German philosophy, art criticism and sociology (e.g. Hannah Arendt, Martin Heidegger, Nicolas Bourriaud and Richard Sennett), my work, with the exception of Hannah Arendt, draws on different philosophical, dance, performance and art theory and criticism, cultural studies, sociological and economic theory texts. These include texts by Miranda Joseph, Emmanuel Levinas, Karl Marx, Pierre Bourdieu, Félix Guattari, Jacques Rancière, Dave Elder-Vass, Ramsay Burt, Jeremy Gilbert, Jodi Dean, Claire Bishop, André Lepecki, Baz Kershaw, Shannon Jackson, David Graeber, Jacques Derrida, Boyana Cvejič, Adam Arvidsson, Bruno Latour, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri and Clive Barnett. It nevertheless has certain affinities with the

work of Sehgal and Bel: it involves a self-conscious reflection on the means of making work, it attempts to intervene in the discourse that it comes from, it reflects on its own nature and its status as art and refuses the seduction of narrative and technical virtuosity. In addition, like Sehgal and Bel, I make meaning-making machines. Most of the work is based on performance systems that have rules and instructions and which reveal their construction to the spectator. Two of my works, although they are made using a systematic approach, do not function themselves as systems, but critique or create tension with the systems in which they are embedded: *Martyro* critiqued the value and ideological systems that were the context of its presentation and on which context the work absolutely depended for its making and reading; *IDEA: THIS IS GOOD* took into consideration and commented on the immediate context of its presentation – the theme of the exhibition the *archive of destruction* and the space of the gallery – and critiqued the larger economic system.

Finally, an important difference between my work and that of the other choreographers is the manner in which I use text. In some cases, I treat text as pre-existing material, handled according to specific rules and read by a performer as part of the work (as in *Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality – A Lecture-Performance*). In other work, the pre-existing material or newly composed text written by me is physically present in the work and read by the spectator (as in both *Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?* and in *IDEA: THIS IS GOOD*). Sehgal uses text in *Ann Lee* that is scripted and is communicated by the performer, but the performer is a character. In *These Associations* pre-existing text is used – philosophical quotations by Martin Heidegger and Hannah Arendt – but this text is sung. And although the work also relies on text spoken by the

performers, that text is based on personal accounts: it is autobiographical. Bel, from *Veronique Doisneau* (2004) on, started using text quite extensively, but these texts are also autobiographical, spoken by his performers, authored by the performers with his help, memorised and delivered to the spectators. Let us begin with 'Inter-Vention' 1: *Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality – A Lecture-Performance*.

SECTION I

Section I attempts to rethink the relationship between art, politics and the social within the current economy. It begins with the first practice work of this research project 'Inter-Vention' 1: *Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality – A Lecture-Performance*. This work aims at presenting the kind of thinking and making this project began with and the questions that arose from my practice that later became the basis for this PhD project. The subsequent two chapters examine the work of Tino Sehgal. Chapter 1 carries the questions that arose from 'Inter-Vention 1' forward, focusing on Sehgal's work *Ann Lee* (2011), while Chapter 2 examines Sehgal's work *These Associations* (2012). Section I closes with *Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?* ('Inter-Vention' 2), which was created to address the issues I identified with Sehgal's work.

'INTER-VENTION' 1

Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality – A Lecture-Performance (2011)

Communi(cati)on of Crisis Symposium, Nafpaktos, Greece

There is great disorder under heaven, the situation is excellent.
(Mao Zedong cited in Žižek, 2010, p. xii).

1. The Economies of Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality

My thinking about art making shifted during my Masters studies (2008-2009), when I came into contact with two different ideological apparatuses – those of two teachers who approached art making, the reasons for and therefore its practice, differently from one another. One saw art making as a way to effect social change (by, for example, attempting to change a way of thinking through the manner in which a work is constructed and/or the issues it dealt with); the other saw art making more abstractly, as more concerned with the choreographic on its own terms. This confrontation influenced how my initial interest in narrative, although expressed abstractly through movement or action, led to my interest in its undermining. The problem with narrative I identified was its ability to perpetuate existing ideas and values. It was my love-hate relationship with narrative that led to my interest in systems as a way to undermine it. It also led to my initial encounter with the work of Tino Sehgal and Jérôme Bel, both of whom use systems in making their work. Systems become important to my practice because of their potential to reveal how they function and the assumption upon which they are built (Kershaw, 2007).

Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality – A Lecture-Performance follows the aforementioned vein of thinking. It is concerned with the undermining

of narrative through the construction of systems. Let me first clarify my understanding and use of the term 'narrative' in this work.

The French philosopher, linguist, critic, and semiotician Roland Barthes argues that narrative shares the same structural characteristics with the sentence. It has 'tenses, aspects, moods, persons' and can be described in levels of hierarchical relationship, which, although they 'have their own units and correlations...no level on its own can produce meaning' (1977, p. 84 -86). Barthes explains that narrative has two levels:

The 'story' (the argument), comprising a logic of actions and a 'syntax' of characters, and *discourse*, comprising the tenses, aspects and modes of the narrative...Narrative is a hierarchy of instances. To understand a narrative is not merely to follow the unfolding of the story, it is also to recognize its construction in 'storeys,' to project the horizontal concatenations of the narrative 'thread' on to an implicitly vertical axis; to read (to listen to) a narrative is not merely to move from one word to the next, it is also to move from one level to the next [...] Meaning is not 'at the end' of the narrative, it runs across it (Barthes, 1977, p. 87).

In narrative, Barthes explains, '[i]ntegration guides the understanding of the discontinuous elements, simultaneously contiguous and heterogeneous (it is thus that they appear in the syntagm which knows only one dimension – that of succession)'. For this reason, narrative 'appears in a succession of tightly interlocking mediate and immediate elements; dystaxia determines a "horizontal" reading, while integration superimposes a "vertical" reading' (Barthes 1977, p. 122). In addition, American literary critic and theorist Robert Scholes refers to narrative as 'the symbolic representation of a sequence of events connected by subject matter and related by time' (1980, p. 204-205).

Drawing from Barthes and Scholes, I understand narrative as a structure constituted by different utterances/ elements, which are ordered and related to one another in a specific manner so that meaning unfolds across them, thereby establishing a level of stability of meaning. I therefore consider a statement, a play, a book, ideas, values, discourse, and the current socioeconomic crisis as narratives themselves: as certain kinds of utterances/elements that are ordered a certain way creating narratives that can be undermined; narratives the meaning of which can be put into crisis.

In *Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality*, what is undermined, as I will further elaborate, are the narrative texts used as part of the work. This undermining functions as a gesture towards the importance of questioning and undermining larger narratives: the ideological, value and economic systems in which we – the makers and spectators of performance – and the work itself are embedded. This work then, much like other postmodern work, functions at the level of abstraction. As it has perhaps already become apparent, the terms ‘narrative’ and ‘gesture’ and their relation to the terms ‘abstractly’ and ‘crisis’ are the operating words for this work.

Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble started with the question: ‘How do I use narrative text, but undo it in such a manner using systems for the construction of a new work so that different ideas and values arise from it?’. The work’s first incarnation was a text for the page (Paramana, 2011) created as a response to *activate* e-journal’s call for creative works that dealt with performative writing: with language ‘not as text but as an event’ (Tim Etchells cited in *activate*, 2010). It was later developed into a lecture-performance for the *Communi(cati)on of Crisis*

Symposium in Greece (22-25 June 2011, Nafpaktos, Greece) and is the version of the work I discuss here. The symposium and the current larger economy were the economies I took into consideration in making the work.

The *Communi(cati)on of Crisis* Symposium was organised by the Institute for Live Arts Research: ‘an Athens-based research institute founded in 2010 in order to promote and support creative dialogues between theory and practice’ and ‘[i]nitiat[e] innovative research processes and educational/cultural production in the field of performance’ (Institute for Live Arts Research, 2011). By 2011, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis, Greece was (and still is) struggling financially and therefore socially as well. Considering that it is important that crisis is neither silenced nor ‘absorb[ed]... within a normative continuum’, the symposium aimed at ‘*articulat[ing]* as well as *activat[ing]* crisis...by closely studying the parameters of the critical situation... analyzing the destabilization...[and] addressing the critical condition at stake’. It ‘attempt[ed] to suspend [crisis] in order to open it up and create the possibility *for an other future*’ through the presentations of talks and performances that dealt with ‘expressing “the vibrations, clinches and openings” (Deleuze & Guattari), which accrue to crisis as its last valuable load’ (Institute for Live Arts Research, 2011). Commenting on both the symposium’s theme, as well as on the current socioeconomic crisis, *Muddle Muddle* considered the undermining of narrativity as creating a condition of crisis of meaning, of interpretation, a state of disorder that we might want to suspend in order to create possible futures/meanings/understandings.

2. The Work – Rationale, Methodology and Construction

The work's rationale and the manner in which it critiqued the current economy through its response to the symposium's theme offered above, as well as its methodology and the details of its construction that will follow were built into the work itself: they were shared with the spectator through a text I read in a recorded video at the beginning of the lecture-performance. This video was projected behind two performers sitting on each side of a table. In the video, during my reading of the text, Eirini Kartsaki performed actions that interrupted or undermined the text that I read – a narrative itself (please see *Appendix 1A* for this video).

Although 'failure' was invoked a few times in this text/video, the interest in failure was in relation to narrativity: the undermining of narrativity through the construction of systems, creating a condition of crisis of meaning. The video began as follows:

Good evening. Thank you [to spectators], and Elena Koukoli, on your left, and Nana Sachini on your right, for being here. Or should I say there. Welcome to *Muddle, Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality – A Lecture Performance*. My name is Katerina Paramana. I will be reading a short introduction that addresses the why and how of this performance's construction. I hope that this performance fails you successfully (text from the video of the performance).

In the video, I continue to share with the spectators the rationale of the work and its relationship to the symposium's theme. I then explain that the construction of this work was inspired by Stephen Bottoms's text on disorder as a state of possibility:

A bounded system, all other things being equal, will spontaneously run down. Things will fall apart; ordered patterns will get muddled. And yet, on the other hand, muddle may also be the very state of disorder through which new possibilities for progress or creativity become apparent (2007, p. 15).

I go on to explain that, although I do not think that narrative is inherently a bad thing, I believe that is important to find ways that it can be questioned, undermined and muddled, and begin to share the kind of system I used for the work's construction:

I consider books to be narratives, vehicles for the circulation of ideas; 'bounded systems' that influence our modes of thought and our dialogical exchanges. In order to question the ideas circulated in my home and see which ideas 'fail' and which 'survive' despite their interaction with other texts, I decided to use as source materials for this work the books – and only those – that are in my home. These are from various disciplines and genres. In order to extract materials from the books, I followed a system that was inspired by the idea of disorder, thereby creating a muddled choreography of disordered texts from which possibilities for new connections emerged (text from the video of the performance).

My first rule in creating the performance text out of these books was that I could not use any of my own words. All words came from other authors. I used a system that would lead me to specific books and specific pages in each one from which I could take fragments of text. Inspired by Bottom's idea of disorder, as well as a conversation I had with a mathematician friend, I decided to use a mathematic formula as part of the system I created to retrieve texts from the books. I used the formula for the probability of order/disorder. Also called the permutation formula, it determines the likelihood of picking a specific page in your first attempt, if the pages of a book were thrown in the air at the same time and fell on the ground. In an indirect way, this formula points to the fact that everything tends to disorder.

System for the Retrieval of Texts

There are 252 books in my home. In order to keep this text to a manageable length, I chose every tenth book in the order that they are placed in the bookcases. This resulted in the choice of 25 books. I then followed this system:

1. Find the total number of pages of each book.
2. Use a scientific calculator. Because the scientific calculator cannot handle permutations for numbers over 69 or with decimals, take the total number of pages in every book and divide by ten. Then round to the closest whole number.
3. Enter that number into the calculator's permutation formula function. The formula always produces a huge number. Therefore, use only the first two digits. The resulting number is the page to be chosen from this book.
4. If the page number produced is a picture – although this could also be considered text – go to the immediately previous page of this book. If that page is also a picture, go to the immediately next page of the first picture.

Example

Book: Flynn, T. R. (2006) *Existentialism: A Very Short Introduction*.
Oxford: Oxford University Press.

1. Total number of pages: 144
2. $144 / 10 = 14,4 \rightarrow 14$
3. Enter 14 into calculator's Permutation Formula: $1 / 14! = 1.14707456 \times 10^{-11} \rightarrow 11$
4. Go to page 11 of this book. This page is a picture → go to page 10.
5. Follow this system for every one of the books.
6. When you have one page from every book, chose text from each page that can be choreographed
 - a) with the other texts in the structure of a paper (you will need text suited for the prologue, arguments, conclusion etc.) and
 - b) in a manner that there is tension and doubleness between the texts.
 You can cut sentences, but you cannot use any of your own words. You can repeat text when needed or when constructive to do so.
7. Reduce text to produce more layers of meaning.

When the fragments of text were chosen using the aforementioned methodology, I choreographed them in such a way that narratives were established and undermined by others and tension between the texts and multiplicity of meaning was possible. The text was structured as an essay where meaning needs to flow to some extent, but where meaning can also fold: that is, be uncertain, contradictory or multiple. One of the texts used to produce this work was a page in a dictionary. Definitions of words starting with the letter 'B' were used as a device that gave a visual consistency to the work, but could also sabotage or expand the meaning established in the paragraphs that preceded or followed each definition.

Muddle Muddle was performed by four people: two in the present, and two in the past. The live performers read the choreographed text, which was accompanied by a slide show of photos and sounds. Eirini Kartsaki and I were only present through recorded audio and video. Like Eirini in the video, the role of the slideshow of photographs and sounds was to comment, disrupt, undermine or open up the meaning of the text read by the two performers. Thus the original texts/narratives were undermined twice. The performance of the text by two voices accompanied by sounds and visuals, gestured towards the importance of paying attention and discovering what Foucault referred to as 'discontinuities' (1972, p. 26); of questioning, analysing, even causing the failure of the narratives by which we live – be it identity, history or our current crisis – advocating that disorder, uncertainty, instability of meaning can create potentialities. They can offer new ways to hear, see, analyse, experience and take action that can contribute to new understandings, to new possibilities.



Muddle, Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality – A Lecture Performance at the 'Communi(cati)on of Crisis' Symposium in Nafpaktos, Greece, June 2011. Performed by Eirini Kartsaki, Elena Koukoli, Nana Sachini and Katerina Paramana. Video still from video of performance. Recorded by Simos Veis. In the video projection, Eirini Kartsaki is undermining my speech using among other ways different objects.

Although questions about authorship and intention were inherent in this method of making work, this work's aim was that, through the fragmentation of the initial narratives, the muddling and the recontextualization of texts, new connections and meanings would be produced for and by the reader. I proposed this text as a way to question narrative by undermining its structure and also as a way that writing, by performing failures (by confounding expectations), can open possibilities for new meanings. (The text and slideshow can also be experienced as an installation where the spectator, after watching the introductory video, can read the text and play the slide-show herself. Please see *Appendix 1C* for the text read by the two performers and *Appendix 1B* for the PowerPoint of images and sounds).



Muddle, Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality – A Lecture Performance at the 'Communi(cati)on of Crisis' Symposium in Nafpaktos, Greece 2011. Performed by Eirini Kartsaki, Elena Koukoli, Nana Sachini and Katerina Paramana. Video still from the performance recorded by Simos Veis. Here, Elena Koukoli (left) and Nana Sachini (right) read the text accompanied by a PowerPoint of images and sounds that undermine the text that they read. The current slide is from a protest in Athens. The placard reads 'We Resist'.

3. On Gestures

Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality – A Lecture-Performance set out to undermine narrative texts in order to point to the importance of examining the narratives by which we live and to disorder as a fruitful way of discovering new ways to think and act. Its dramaturgy, dependent on systems,

enabled the spectator to observe its construction, like observing a machine working. It also required of her to always have to regain her balance by constructing new relations between the narratives presented and undermined. It attempted to function like the game Tetris, where one can observe things being built and collapse in order for new structures to be constructed. In *Muddle Muddle*, the relation of each new structure to the previous one, as well as that between text, image and sound, had to be created by the spectator.

As expressed in the performance video, the work functioned as a *gesture*: it pointed to the current *crisis* as a *narrative* itself, of which the causes and effects needed to be critically examined. But are these kinds of gestures, which function at such a level of *abstraction*, enough to effect change in the contemporary moment? What does this kind of work actually *do*? Can this kind of work effect any kind of change? Can gestures alone do this? What makes a work able to potentiate change? Failure, narrative or otherwise, is something on which capitalism thrives. What kinds of relationships can an artwork produce within itself and with the economies in which it is embedded that can resist the ethics and rationalities of today's economy and perhaps suggest an ethics of encounter different from it in order to aid to the transformation of society? These are the questions that arose for me as a choreographer/performance maker out of my experience of making and presenting this work. This is also where this research project begins, highlighting the questions that the project addresses across its length, using several different manoeuvres.

The first of these manoeuvres is turning to look at the function of systems and rules and the relationship they create with the spectator – the manner in which

they enable the legibility of the work and its construction – in a work that is in some ways similar to *Muddle Muddle*. This work is Tino Sehgal's *Ann Lee* (2010). In Chapter 1, I examine the economies of relation that this work produces both within itself and with the economies in which the work is embedded.

CHAPTER 1

(RE)MAKING ANN LEE

In this chapter, I examine Tino Sehgal's work *Ann Lee*, which I encountered as a spectator. I first offer an account of my experience of the work. In this account, I interweave information about Ann Lee's history as a character used by different artists and about Sehgal's concerns as an artist presenting 'immaterial' work in the material world of the museum. I suggest that the two questions asked in Sehgal's work by the character Ann Lee become the crux of the work, and that their meeting point is 'production': the production of meaning and relations within the work and the production of the work in relation to its context of presentation (via the first question); and the work's production in relation to the larger economy (via the second question). The first question allows me to discuss the economy of relations within the work and with the museum, while the second allows me to discuss the work's relation to the neoliberal capitalist economy. I suggest that, although Sehgal considers his works 'immaterial', they are indeed very material because they produce social relations, which are material things and therefore have material effects. I argue that although the work points to the importance of relationships, the kind of relationships enacted do not suggest a production of the social that can potentiate change in the contemporary moment. I question whether, like *Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality*, the simple gesture of pointing to what is important is enough.

1. *Ann Lee* by Tino Sehgal

I entered the room with a dozen more people. It was a white cube-like space, empty of everything but a young girl. 'Hello. Nice to see you. My name is Ann Lee', she uttered, sucking out of the room like a vacuum any sound made by the

spectators. The effect of her utterance and her demeanour were utterly strange. A blue-eyed girl of no more than twelve years old had commanded everybody's attention with a simple greeting. It was not what she had said, but the manner in which she had said it. I was looking at a young girl, but I could barely recognise her as human. It did not feel as though she was acting, which is what made this feel stranger. The colouring of her voice, its lack of subtext, the neutrality of her body gestures, all made her seem like a foreign creature. She looked us in the eye with no reservations, without the shyness usually accompanying a girl her age. She was humble, but her humility was that of a mature, knowing person. I remember taking a step back, leaning with my back against the wall in need of more distance to observe and understand what I was encountering. Yet, there was no room – physically or temporally – afforded to me for this until after the performance ended. For the time being, I was arrested by her gaze.

Ann Lee explained that she had never met living people before and that she had many questions to ask. With the look and the voice of a scientist examining an object, she asked 'What's the difference between a sign and melancholia?' I did not know whether it was the question or the fact that she was asking it with such naturalness that perplexed me the most. So I did not answer. I continued to observe her as she calmly waited for an answer. One of the spectators spoke up, giving what I remember to be an articulate and informed response. I do not remember its actual content anymore. I do remember that I was more intrigued by Ann Lee's unmovable reaction than by the sophisticated response to her question. I also remember that the person giving the response – 'for sure an academic' I had thought at the time – actually blushed. Like me, he must have also not expected her unshakeable reaction to his response and the fact that she welcomed it like an

experienced conference presenter. She did not respond to it, but moved on to pose the question again to the rest of the spectators. This time nobody responded. I guess the experience of responding seemed a bit traumatic to the rest of us.

Ann Lee continued informing us that she had previously existed in several different 'dimensions'. She initially existed in the first dimension – as an idea in her creator's mind. She then moved to the second dimension via her transformation into a two-dimensional Japanese animation character. She later entered the third dimension through her transformation into three-dimensional artworks with the help of artists Pierre Huyghe and Philippe Parreno.

The Ann Lees before 'Ann Lee'

(In the 2nd dimension)

Artist Pierre Huyghe explains that, in 1999, he and Philippe Parreno purchased the copyright of Ann Lee, a Manga character from the Japanese agency *Kworks* that appeared in the Masamune Shirow's manga classic *Ghost in the Shell* (Huyghe, 2007). In an effort to save Ann Lee from certain death – her character lacked adaptability to different storylines and complex character traits necessary for the survival of a Manga character – the two artists purchased her copyright (ibid.).

(In the 3rd dimension)

Huyghe and Parreno then created the project *No Ghost Just a Shell*, which, as explained in the work's press release, made Ann Lee available for no cost to a series of artists commissioned by Huyghe and Parreno to create museum artworks.

These works were to function as possible scenarios – as different ‘chapter[s] in the history of a sign’ – in which Ann Lee was freed from her position of a mere product and was able to take her life and identity into her own hands (*Kunsthalle Zurich Press Release*, 2002).

Huyghe explains that, although a sign is normally purchased – or more accurately only rented – for the purposes of advertising or for narrative explorations, in *No Ghost Just a Shell* different people spoke *through* this character by making artworks (museum pieces, sculptures and paintings). In the work, *One Million Kingdoms* (Huyghe, 2001), Ann Lee, who is now male, spoke about himself: ‘his condition of being a character’ (Huyghe, 2007). He was an image that represented only itself, what Huyghe describes as a ‘deviant sign’ (*ibid.*). Huyghe and Parreno’s gesture had released Ann Lee from her role of a Manga character. However, he/she remained a commodity, a means of artistic and economic gain, in the hands of the various authors. He/she functioned as a vehicle, a means of transmission of their ideas, for the performance of their various narratives (*Tate Modern*, 2001).

It has been claimed that, through this project, Huyghe and Parreno intervened in the system of production, distribution and consumption: by not requiring copyright payment, they undermined the commercial laws of production and distribution; by allowing a series of artists to use the same image in different works and contexts, they challenged understandings of authorship, narration and presentation (*Kunsthalle Zurich Press Release*, 2002). It would be important to note though that, as recontextualising a character into a different medium is not a new idea (Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, for example, was transformed from a character on a page, to a character in a live theatre play, to a character in a film – Clapp, 2010),

any challenging of understandings of authorship, narration and presentation was possible due to the existence of copyright.²⁰

However, the radical move with regards to copyright was made later. Huyghe explains that upon the project's completion they signed Ann Lee's copyright over to the character: they 'gave the copyright back to the sign itself' (Huyghe, 2007). Ann Lee is 'existent as a sign; it appears as an image, but it appears as an entity. We can still talk about it, make a novel about Ann Lee' (ibid.). Huyghe here makes the distinction that in his, as well as other Ann Lee artworks, the sign of Ann Lee, although an image (which we may understand as a reproduction of the form of a person that is not real or present, an imaginary person), was still perceived as an entity: as an existence with a past, present and future, as a person existing in time with agency and self-determinations. 'Whether, how, through whom and with what identity the figure, the sign, "lives on" remain[ed] to be seen' (Huyghe explains 2002).²¹

²⁰ 'Copyright is an automatic right and arises whenever an individual or company creates a work...Normally the individual or collective who authored the work will exclusively own the work and is referred to as the "first owner of copyright"... However, if a work is produced as part of employment then the first owner will normally be the company that is the employer of the individual who created the work. Freelance or commissioned work will usually belong to the author of the work, unless there is an agreement to the contrary (i.e. in a contract for service). Just like any other asset, copyright may be transferred or sold by the copyright owner to another party. Rights cannot be claimed for any part of a work which is a copy taken from a previous work. For example, in a piece of music featuring samples from a previous work, the copyright of the samples would still remain with the original author. Only the owner, or his exclusive licensee can bring proceedings in the courts' (UK©CS: The UK Copyright Service, 2014a).

²¹ It is noteworthy that all the information on and references to these works are exclusively found on online text and video materials. Their lack of circulation in non-academic sources points to the under-theorisation of Huyghe and Parreno's work, while their availability and therefore accessibility of this information to a wide public (and not exclusively to an academic audience), reveals the 'copyleft' attitude of the artists towards their work.

In the 4th dimension / Sehgal's 'Ann Lee'

Having existed as an idea in a creator's mind (first dimension), as a two-dimensional animation character (second dimension) and as three-dimensional artwork (third dimension), Ann Lee explained that, with the help of Sehgal, she was now trying to exist in the fourth dimension: in time. Before exiting the room, she posed a second question to us: 'Would you rather be too busy or not busy enough?'. I remember laughing while leaving the space – probably at my own strange reaction to an even stranger work.

This is the sign that Tino Sehgal used for his work *Ann Lee*, presented at the Manchester Art Gallery as part of the Manchester International Festival's *11 Rooms* in July 2011, enabling the sign to keep on living. From a conversation about our experience of the work with a friend and colleague who watched the performance in the group immediately after my group,²² it became apparent, that, not only was there more than one performer of the work but that each of the performers performed a different version, a variation of the work. By my colleague's recollection, *Ann Lee* entered the room after the audience. This was contrary to my experience, where 'Ann Lee' was already on the left side of the room when I entered. My colleague also recalls an action that I did not witness. She remembers that after *Ann Lee* asked the question about the difference between a sign and melancholia, she found her way to the floor. Lying there, she recounted the memory of being at 'Tino's' house when a book fell out of the bookcase. With this single gesture *Ann Lee* made the maker of the artwork – 'Tino' – a character in her own fiction. She then quoted from that book – Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition* – while gesturing in an abstract manner before exiting the room.

²² Many thanks to Antje Hildebrandt for this conversation.

It was not clear at the time why there were variations of the work. Was it because the artist wanted to see which version of the work was most effective? Or because he was interested in the possible realisation – like my colleague's and mine – that, although we witnessed the work, we were not able to see all of it, all of its performed versions? That there was still more to be seen that we missed? As Paolo Virno posits, performance is a virtuosic activity: '*an activity which requires the presence of others*, which exists only in the presence of an audience...[it] makes sense only if it seen or heard' (2007, p. 52). Was Sehgal counting on the instability of our memories as witnesses of the work, further resisting the pressure and possibility to document 'it', to treat the work as a solid, singular object? What did the work point to and what relations were produced within the economy of the work and with the economies in which it was embedded?

Sehgal's 'Immaterial' Objects

Sehgal's work has been mainly addressed by critics and reviewers in newspapers, magazines and online journals. For example, art historian and critic Claire Bishop (2005) examines a number of Sehgal's works. She discusses his background in dance and economics, his preference for describing his works as 'sculptures' or 'situations' and his performers as 'interpreters'. She also comments on Sehgal's lack of concern for his 'immaterial' objects entering the market and for potentially falling into oblivion due to their ephemeral nature and lack of documentation. Elsewhere, Sebastian Frenzel (2005) points out the 'carefully planned sequence of actions' and the dependency of Sehgal's work on the viewer to activate it. Arthur Lubow (2010), in his review in the *New York Times*, describes a number of Sehgal's works and the process by which he recruits adult and child performers. He also

remarks on Sehgal's 'avoidance of unnecessary consumption' and claim that a specialist in anything cannot stay outside the market.

Sehgal is concerned with making performance work for museums²³ that resists material commodification: unlike conventional museum works, his work refuses to leave material objects behind.²⁴ Despite this resistance, his work nevertheless enters the market economy. The work is sold to and purchased by museums and collectors, but, as no documentation of the performance is allowed, its traces are only found in the memories of its spectators. The work is nevertheless publicised, marketed, written about in reviews and journals and purchased with money, which are all material products, and which lead to his accumulation of cultural and perhaps economic capital. However, agreeing with artist Hito Seyerl (2010), I suggest that the politics of an artwork are found 'within its production, its distribution, and its reception' rather than in the content of the work or the claimed political tendencies of its maker. Or, as I argue throughout this thesis, in the economy of relations produced within the work and of the work's relation with the economies in which it is embedded.

²³ Although Sehgal mostly presents his work in institutions referred to as 'art galleries' ('Ann Lee' was presented at the 'Manchester Art Gallery'), these spaces function more like museums: their primary function is to collect and exhibit artworks – as opposed to exhibit and sell art which is the primary function of an art gallery strictly defined. For this reason these institutions fall under the definition of 'museum' as agreed by the Museums Association (2014). Tino Sehgal presents his work in museums (according to the aforementioned definition) because his work draws its strength from the museum's history, function and the discourse surrounding it. It is therefore important that 'museum' instead of 'art gallery' is used in discussing his work and why I intentionally do so throughout this thesis.

²⁴ 'The museum is the place where objects are given amazing value, and it seemed interesting *to go into this place and not do that...* There's a kind of networking and reinterpreting conventions, or setting up new conventions or taking them from a different angle' (Sehgal cited in Stein, 2009, my emphasis).

Sehgal's Ann Lee asked us two questions: 'What is the difference between a sign and melancholia?' and 'Would you rather be too busy or not busy enough?' What is Sehgal pointing us towards with these questions? I suggest that the two questions become the crux of the work and that, although they initially seem unrelated, they have a meeting point in 'production': the production of an economy of relations within the work through its materiality, dramaturgy, construction of meaning and of the relation to the spectator, and the production of an economy of relations of the work to the museum and of commodity production. I will use the two questions asked in the version of the work I witnessed as the frames for the discussion of each of the two types of production.

2. 'What is the difference between a sign and melancholia'

Ann Lee: The 'melancholic' sign

'What is the difference between a sign and melancholia?' Is Anne Lee melancholic? Does she long to belong? The question initially seems to be comparing apples (sign) with oranges (melancholia) – or vice versa if you prefer. I am certain that, as with his work *This is so contemporary* (2005) (where guards dance and sing 'this is so contemporary', placing the spectator in the position of questioning what is being referred to as such), Sehgal is quite aware of the possible readings of the question, as he has previously stated that he is interested in creating such enigmas (Sehgal cited in Farinati, 2005). Upon hearing the question posed by Ann Lee, we have a few options. We can decide that we will not compare apples and oranges and ignore the question altogether. We can decide that by using such a complex question the work is simply trying to be playful – that it is making fun of itself as a theoretically driven / academic work – and again dismiss the question. Or perhaps

we can decide that the question is a sophisticated one and that it holds great importance for the work's understanding. Sehgal has made comments about previous work that would lead to this conclusion. For example, he has made the (arguably classist statement) that *This is so contemporary* '[was] for people who live around here and have a beauty in their own right', whereas 'Exchange' (2004) '[was] for people from Venice who are more academic more sophisticated' (Sehgal cited in Farinati, 2005). Perhaps then he has created *Ann Lee* with an audience in mind like that of Venice; perhaps Ann Lee's question is the more 'sophisticated' of the two and thus requires further reflection. Since all scenarios I presented except the last in different ways dismiss the question, I will entertain the last scenario to see what other ideas might surface. For this, it will be helpful to look at the terms 'sign' and 'melancholia' individually.

Derrida suggests that a written syntagma, and as we will see shortly, any sign, can be mobile; it can enter different contexts in which possibilities for different meanings become possible (1988, p. 10). He argues that one can detach a sign from its chain and inscribe or graft it into other chains, because

[n]o context can entirely enclose it. Nor any code, the code here being both the possibility and impossibility of writing, of its essential iterability (repetition/alterity). This force of rupture is tied to the spacing [*espacement*] that constitutes the written sign: spacing which separates it from other elements of the internal contextual chain...This spacing is...the emergence of the mark (1988, p. 10).

Derrida argues that this predicate is not restricted only to 'written' communication, but that it is 'found in all language...and ultimately in the totality of "experience"', because 'units of iterability...are separable from their internal and external context and also from themselves (1988, p. 10). In Sehgal's work, Ann Lee is, like Derrida's written syntagma, *grafted* onto a new chain; she enters a new

context, a new chapter in her history as a sign, but carries with her the history of having being in other contexts. Let us now examine the term ‘melancholia.’

The term melancholia refers to ‘a mental disorder characterized by depression, apathy, and withdrawal’ (*The American Heritage Medical Dictionary*, 2007). In attempting to examine the term with more relevance to the field of the arts, I found Laszlo F. Földenyi’s (art theorist, literary scholar and essayist) discussion on melancholia illuminating. The language Földenyi uses to describe melancholia captures in a poetic manner its effects. I therefore provide here his thought as a direct quote rather than paraphrase it. Considering the ‘melancholic’ works in the ‘Melancholy: Genius and Madness in Art’ exhibition in Berlin in 2006, Földenyi describes how he perceives melancholia through the artworks:

Not only is [melancholia] infectious; it deprives the sufferer of everything. The pre-eminent characteristic of melancholy is its capacity to undermine even itself. It remains ceaselessly in motion. It is difficult to catch red-handed, and scarcely easier to repress...Eliminate it here, and it is bound to crop up over there soon enough. Bury it in one location, it will inevitably germinate in another. It is as tough as any weed. Vigorous and viable. A powerful emotion. A condition? A perspective? A disposition? Yes, and even violent when it takes hold of those who want to evade it. And it is adept at dissembling...It promises connectedness to everything, but the result is merely frustration. Coitus absconditus, absent intercourse. It seems to make fertile, while rendering infertile...Can we objectify something whose existential element is movement and unfathomability? Everything testifies to the presence of melancholy, to its being highly amenable to representation, to being nailed down. Yet all the while, a nimble, an agile melancholy keeps up its guard. That must be why each time I catch a glimpse of melancholy in this painting or that sculpture, it instantly plays dead. And the result is often half-hearted: with most of the paintings and statues in question, I no longer see the melancholy itself at all, but instead only the demand that I should perceive it there. But where? (Földenyi, 2006).

Földenyi’s description makes certain common characteristics between a ‘sign’ and ‘melancholia’ visible: they are both mobile; they can both undermine themselves by engendering different contexts and therefore new meanings; they both promise

connectedness to their context but can easily break from it. Like Ann Lee, who moves in different contexts and yet only exists where she is staged, both a sign and melancholia are at the same time mobile and immobile. Yet, we might say that there is one significant ontological difference between the two terms: sign is the 'thing' that we read; melancholia is the possible effect and affect of the reading or inability to read a sign, the inability to read or find meaning; it is, perhaps, a state of being. Is the sign – Ann Lee – melancholic because of its uncertain existence? Despite the fact that Ann Lee was liberated, she still needs someone else to bring her to life. She lives when others speak of, about or through her. Does she long to belong?

Shannon Jackson states that 'classically, melancholia refers to a subject's refusal to release from a lost love object' (Jackson, 2011, p. 189). This view could also support melancholia as something mobile like a sign, for, 'the need to *posses* the love object can be satisfied only by a succession of objects' (Baudrillard, 2005, p. 92). During the performance, Ann Lee mentioned that, with Sehgal's help, she was trying to exist in the fourth dimension – in time. Is she anxious about the success of this attempt? Is she anxious about how much time she has left, about an imminent end to her existence? 'The disappearance of the object is fundamental to performance; it rehearses and repeats the disappearance of the subject who longs always to be remembered' (Phelan, 1993, pp. 146-147). Does 'Ann Lee' long to speak her own thoughts about this predicament – her imminent disappearance? Probably not. After all, she is not real.

In her book *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (1977), Performance Studies scholar Peggy Phelan argues that 'theatre and performance respond to a

psychic need to rehearse for loss, and especially death' (p. 3). She believes that they 'have especially potent lessons for those interested in reassessing our relations to mourning, grief, and loss' and that what she is interested in examining is 'the possibility that something substantial can be made from the outline left after the body has disappeared'; that 'at least the hollow of the outline might allow us to understand more deeply why we long to hold bodies that are gone' (ibid.). Ann Lee does not disappear; she persists, she continues to reappear in new contexts, interfering with the mourning of her loss and with her own mourning of her lost love objects. Melancholia is perhaps the result of this resistance to loss. What is Sehgal saying *through* her by resuscitating her? Why is the question about the difference between a sign and melancholia important to the work?

A triple gesture

Through the question about the difference between a sign and melancholia, Sehgal makes a gesture that has three effects: first, he points to the history of 'Ann Lee' as a sign, therefore enabling an intertextual dialogue. Using Ann Lee as the subject in the work, he references the contexts in which she has already existed. As a result, he also references the ideas behind/produced by those works: authorship, signature, copyright, presentation and interpretation of forms versus their representation, melancholia as a longing to keep something alive. The first two are ideas that Sehgal's work is already concerned with.

Second, and as a consequence of referencing her history, he points to the fact that the sign now exists in a different medium, in a different dimension as Ann Lee explained. In contrast to her materiality in other works (the presentation medium of Ann Lee in those works was not the live body), Ann Lee is alive. The sign has

flesh and blood, it is a live person existing in time. We are therefore much more likely to perceive Ann Lee – the live person in our presence – as melancholic before we come to the conclusion that, despite her apparent ‘liveness’, it is impossible for a sign to ‘feel’ melancholic. We can only read it as such. Thus, we are led to search for the commonalities and differences between the terms ‘sign’ and ‘melancholia’.

Sehgal examines not only the condition of Ann Lee’s existence as a sign, but its transformation in its new context and new materiality. It is the entering of this new materiality in the museum that becomes the third gesture. We might say, then, that there is a *triple transformation* of Ann Lee: the character into a sign, the sign into a different materiality (the live body) and the sign into a new context that traditionally does not host this type of materiality (the museum).

The work’s ephemerality is not only due to the nature of performance in general and to the fact that Sehgal does not permit its documentation, but also a result of its specific materials, which ‘disappear’ at the end of the performance: in making his work, Sehgal only uses live performers – their bodies and voices. The existence of Ann Lee is ephemeral: she is alive only due to the presence of the spectators at the time of the performance and of the performer embodying the character. But is this true? Ann Lee is actually still alive and will continue to live in the memory of her spectators, through this piece of writing, in the effects she produced, in the ideas she generated through those works’ encounters with their spectators. These opposing views on the ephemerality of performance remind us of a well-known debate on the ontology of performance.

Phelan raises the issue of performance's disappearance, and puts forward a view, which has been discussed by several performance theorists. In an often-cited passage she states that

[p]erformance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance's being, like the ontology of subjectivity proposed here, becomes itself through disappearance [...] The disappearance of the object is fundamental to performance; it rehearses and repeats the disappearance of the subject who longs always to be remembered (1993, pp. 146-147).

Phelan then suggests that the ephemerality of performance allows it to become itself through its own disappearance. It is due to this disappearance, Phelan argues, that performance resists reproduction. She believes that, because the ontology of performance is antithetical to documentation, performance resists the circulation of capital:

Performance in a strict ontological sense is nonreproductive. It is this quality which makes performance the runt of the litter of contemporary art. Performance clogs the smooth machinery of reproductive representation necessary to the circulation of capital (1993, p. 148).

Phelan's views have been countered from different angles by cultural theorist Miranda Joseph and performance theorists Philip Auslander, Adrian Heathfield, André Lepecki, Rebecca Schneider and Dominic Johnson among others. I will be addressing here the writings most relevant to the conversation.

Rebecca Schneider (2001) argues that performance need not leave behind objects, documents, bones (playing with a death analogy) in order to remain. It remains in our memory and flesh in a much more complicated manner. Performance thus becomes an act of remaining, a means of reappearing. She explains that although in, for example, a museum context performance's claimed disappearance can

challenge the status of objects and as a consequence the hegemony of the visual, such a claim ignores different possibilities of knowing and ways of remembering; it ignores the body of the witness in which memory is stored threatening the much valued original; it ignores the ability to transmit memory and knowledge from one body to another as with a ritual act (pp. 100-108).

André Lepecki (2004b), agreeing with Schneider, suggests that performance remains through its tracemaking and its ability to transmit through a different technology: through body-to-body transmission. 'Ann Lee' remained in my memory through my body's reaction to the recollection of the work, through my affected thought processes and action, as a ghost that returned time and again to remind me of the experience and its effects. When I remembered what happened in the work, my body recalled the way it reacted during the performance.

Cultural theorist Miranda Joseph (2002) counters Phelan's arguments on both the performance's disappearance and its resistance to the circulation of capital. With regards to the former, she emphasises that, despite the fact that performance is produced and deproduced in the same moment, performance is *not* unproductive:

[P]erformance is just as well able to bear value (use, exchange, surplus, status) and to produce subjects and social formations as any material commodity, arguably better able: 'The commodification of images of the most ephemeral sort would seem to be a godsend from the standpoint of capital accumulation' (Harvey, *Postmodernity*, 288) (Joseph, 2001, p. 66).

Performance is productive because it is consumed by its witnesses. This act, Joseph holds, is a 'performative production' (Joseph, 2001, p. 34): because performance utilises signification and the spectator consumes these signs, this 'productive consumption' is itself an act of production (ibid., p. 66). Joseph argues that, for Marx, performances are therefore material products: 'consciousness, culture,

religion, language and politics are all social (and thus material products), products of people making their world together through their actions and interactions' (ibid., p. 36).

For this reason, Joseph argues that, despite its claimed disappearance, performance does not resist the circulation of capital. Although, as Marx would suggest, performance, like all service forms, might be considered to be unproductive because it perishes the moment that it is produced, it is on such vanishing products that capitalism flourishes (Joseph, 2001, p. 61).

Following Joseph, I suggest that performance is material because it is social: although it has a different materiality than that of objects in a museum, performance remains in the body of the spectator and therefore has material (social) effects. Thus, Sehgal's work, despite its 'immateriality', functions in the same manner as the material objects hosted in the museum and is also capitalised on in much the same way as those objects. In addition, Sehgal is not the first or only artist who has introduced this kind of different materiality – the live body – in the museum context. There have been quite a few other artists who have done so: Trisha Brown, Xavier Le Roy and Lea Anderson, to name a few. So if 'immateriality' is not that which in Sehgal's work challenges the museum's economy, then what, if anything, is? Let us return to what happens in the work, the relationship that it creates with the spectator, through the first question.

The question about the difference between a sign and melancholia itself creates a pause for the spectator: we have to pause to consider the question, for its meaning and intention are not immediately apparent. The question, as illustrated earlier,

actually provokes more questions than it entices responses. We have a strange interaction with a strange person that poses a strange question. More than challenging anything else, Sehgal challenges his spectators with strange situations. His work is effective *because of* this strangeness, which comes from two directions: first, from the manner in which he situates his work in the museum and second, from the relationships he builds between the work and the spectators.

With the exception of his refusal to use written contracts for the purchase of the work by museums and collectors, Sehgal follows the 'rules' of the museum unequivocally: the work is presented during and throughout the opening hours of the museum and for the time period of an exhibition. The spectators must also follow all the rules to see the work: they must purchase a ticket, observe the museum decorum of dress, noise level and movement pattern and, in the way I had to do with Ann Lee, they must wait in the queue patiently for their turn to come to see the work.

In addition, Sehgal's work is carefully considered and constructed according to rules. Due to their clarity in the function of the work, these rules become evident to the spectator as the work unfolds. His work *This Progress* (2010), for example, presented at the Guggenheim on a spiralling ramp, starts when a child approaches a spectator, announcing to her that 'This is a work by Tino Sehgal'. Upon the child's request, the spectator follows the child up the ramp. The child then poses the question 'What is Progress?' to the spectator. A conversation ensues which is continued until they meet an older child, then a teenager, an adult and a senior. The rules of the work become clear as the spectator experiences it. The 'interpreters' become older, the question remains the same – 'What is Progress?' –

the walking continues upwards and the conversation is interrupted once a new 'interpreter' is encountered in their journey up the ramp. The logic of the work's structure is exposed to the spectator, allowing her to understand its construction. And therefore the attention is turned to what is happening *due* to the work: to the questions it is asking, the logic or assumptions that it is built on, its relation to its environment and the relations that it constructs.

Ann Lee is even simpler in its structure: we enter the room; there is a girl; she informs us that she is not really one of us and that she will be asking us questions. The rules and terms of engagement are revealed; they are established – as with a machine that we can simply watch functioning. It is for this reason – the clarity of the work's structure – that we are able to turn our attention to the content of the 'interpreter's' speech and, in turn, interpret it and draw connections to its extended environment. This is the second movement a spectator makes when watching the work: she first analyses the work's structure; she then returns to the work, its meta-meanings and the relationships it constructs. Once this movement back to the work is made, one realises the strangeness of the situation: all rules have been followed, the structure of the work also follows certain rules that are decipherable, but then, things are still strange. The work, in its taking place, creates relationships between itself and the spectators that feel awfully familiar and yet completely unfamiliar. It gives the appearance of a social situation, of constructing social relations, but it does not really do this. It maintains its distance as an artwork, as if this artwork (like other artwork objects in the museum) is in a glass encasement and once in a while it lifts the lid to poke the spectator with a question, but closes it again to avoid engaging in any dialogue.

Nicholas Ridout shares his experience as a spectator of *This Progress* with the first 'interpreter'. The interpreter, who was a young boy, asked him what he thought progress was. Ridout discusses the uncomfortable predicament of struggling to give 'an authentic' response to the child and the distance that he thought that the encounter required.

What this encounter, and the affective response it produced, depended upon was distance and representation. There is distance everywhere, even if it is almost always distance that we feel as proximity. We are three (or four) of us trying to get along, to make the social thing function, but we all know, too, that this is no social thing, at least not in the ordinary, everyday way. We are in an art gallery, for a start: it is as though our conversation was already pinned up for inspection. The distance between us may look tiny when compared with that created in the theatre between an actor onstage and a spectator in the back row of the auditorium, but it is just as effective and involves the same process: representation (2008, p. 19)

As with *Ann Lee*, the strangeness of the work comes from the sociality it creates, which is exaggerated due the encounter of the spectator with a child that converses with the maturity of an adult. With the exception of *This Success / This Failure* (2007) in which child performers acted as children – played games in the gallery stopping to announce whether they considered the work to be a success or a failure (Gilbert, 2007) – Sehgal often includes in his work child 'interpreters', who overcome their 'childishness' in the name of the concept of the work. A lot of the work's strangeness comes from this ability of the children in his work to converse with adults and communicate profound ideas in a quite articulate manner for their age.²⁵

²⁵ '[T]he perception of children's social vulnerability can be appropriated for all kinds of political ends, ranging from the sentimental to the curious to the outraged...the child is riveting because of her potential to destroy the aesthetic frame; in her phenomenological presence and her social unpredictability, she is a walking threat to the divide between art and life. That heightened potential for catastrophe in turns makes any controlled execution on her part all the more striking; there is a particular kind of incredulity that comes when a child hits her mark' (Jackson, 2011, pp. 240-241).

Sehgal's work, whether or not the spectator is literally posed a question, always has a demobilising effect: it stops the spectator midstride (metaphorically but often also physically), placing her in the position to question the work, its meaning, her relationship to the work, of the work to its context of presentation. With 'Ann Lee', Sehgal not only 'remakes' the sign of 'Ann Lee', but also 'remakes' the 'rules' of the museum through both his obedience to its rules and his redefining the types of encounters and kinds of sociality that can take place in it. It is through this paradox that the work challenges the context of its presentation. The question of the difference between a sign and melancholia becomes, then, a provocation for pondering the relationship between his Ann Lee and the Ann Lee works preceding it, as well as for the interrogation of the work's relationship to the context of its presentation; it becomes a mechanism for analysing the economies of relation produced within the work and of the work with the economy of the museum.

3. 'Would you rather be too busy or not busy enough?'

The fourth transformation

'Would you rather be too busy or not busy enough?' asked Ann Lee. What is Sehgal pointing us towards this time? As with the first question, there can be multiple readings. We can assume that Ann Lee is asking us whether we prefer to be too busy or not busy enough as spectators: whether we prefer the artwork to keep us constantly mentally or physically engaged, constantly attentive or we prefer that it allows us time for inattention, for mind wandering, possibly for boredom. We can assume that she is asking the same questions of us, but not as spectators of the work, but as spectators in the 'society of the spectacle' (Debord, [1967] 1997),

where, as autonomist Franco Bifo Berardi argues, ‘hyperacceleration [is] used as a crucial capitalist tool’, making attention ‘the main commodity’ (2011, pp. 5-6).

Earlier I suggested that Ann Lee had undergone three transformations: the character into a sign, the sign into a different materiality (the live body) and the sign into a new context – the museum – which does not traditionally host this type of materiality. I propose that this second question points to a fourth transformation: of ‘Ann Lee’ in relation to its larger context, that of commodity production. ‘Ann Lee’ seems to be questioning the choice we have in today’s economy: between constant production / continuous labour and precarious labour. Is being too busy or not busy enough the only two choices we have in neoliberal capitalism? What are the further implications of this question when posed by a young girl to an audience of adults, by this live performer working in a museum, by this artist in the current socioeconomic landscape, in today’s market economy?

Producing in the apparatus of commodity production

‘Would you rather be too busy or not busy enough?’ The question, by virtue of simply being posed, gestures outside the museum. It takes the spectators’ mind outside of the performance work, reminding them that the work is part of something bigger. It makes the performance real, it anchors it in its socioeconomic and cultural context; it makes the connection to its larger context visceral by bridging the discursive (what the work is conceptually about but also articulating the paradox of today’s production) and the experiential (the audience experiences it, makes it real).

The question also points towards Ann Lee as an art object that is part of the system of production, circulation and consumption. Is Ann Lee indirectly referring to her labour as a performer? Is she wondering how long she will continue to work? In her case, her labour is immediately connected to her remaining alive, to existing in time through Sehgal's work: through maintaining her relation to an audience, which consumes her (thereby constituting her as a commodity) and circulates her through their conversations, their memories, their actions (Joseph, 2002). Is Ann Lee afraid of 'dying'? The art-object faces the same imposed dilemma as that of all labourers in neoliberal capitalism – working constantly or not working enough to survive.²⁶ As Shannon Jackson (2012) argues, the times we live in are characterised by an exceedingly flexible labour economy that privileges temporary contract labour. Although flexibility used to be necessary for the creative workers' social agency, now they are faced with precarity. Our current economy is also one of constant production; of a demand for both constant production and consumption – the creation of desire for the latter (consumption) driving the former (production). Global capitalism's insatiable thirst for profit has led to greater inequalities, to outsourcing of labour, to debt-infused societies and to a precarious future. The second question that Ann Lee asks then points to the economies of relation the work produces with the larger economy – neoliberal capitalism – alluding to the problems most of us are facing. Could this work then have the potential to effect change?

²⁶ I purposely do not make the distinction between immaterial and material labourers in contemporary capitalism, because as David Graeber (2008) argues, we are all immaterial labourers by virtue of producing ideas, fashions, culture, which are material things because they have material effects; or as Marx would claim, things that are social and are therefore material products (Marx cited in Joseph, 2002, p. 36). After all, it is the immaterial that is in our times predominantly produced and capitalised on.

On Sociality

In this chapter, I have suggested that the two questions asked in the work point to the production of the economy of relations within the work (through its materiality, dramaturgy and the relation it creates with the spectator) and to the production of the economy of relations of the work to the museum and neoliberal capitalism. I used the two questions as the frames for the discussion of each production. I suggested that Sehgal pointed to Ann Lee's history and therefore to issues of authorship, signature, copyright, presentation and interpretation of forms versus their representation and of melancholia as a longing to keep something alive. He also pointed to what he considers the work's immateriality in the material world of the museum and to the artwork's relationship to issues of precarity in neoliberal capitalism. Most importantly, as a critique of the overproduction of and attention given to objects, by using *Ann Lee* as a vehicle and creating encounters that are unexpected and unconventional for the space of the museum, Sehgal emphasised the importance of relationships. The work created a strange encounter that had a demobilising effect.

But what did this strange encounter actually do? It asked the spectator to consider complicated questions and respond to them, but did not allow her to engage in dialogue. In addition, although the spectator was part of a group, the strange encounter actually made her withdraw back to herself; it made her feel separate from it. This is the reason why I thought it was important to describe my experience of this work in the first person. Furthermore, as I have illustrated, the work required a laborious analysis and perhaps a certain level of knowledge for the spectator to leave the work feeling that she had 'understood' it. Can this strange sociality have the potential to effect change?

Ann Lee leaves me with the same questions that *Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality* does. Like *Muddle*'s undermining of narrative, which gestured towards a rethinking of larger narratives, *Ann Lee* functions at an abstract level: as a gesture. With *Ann Lee*, Sehgal points to the importance of relationships, but does not suggest through the work what *kind* of relationships are important, what *kind* of encounters with others are needed in the contemporary moment. Can this level of abstraction potentiate change in the contemporary moment?

I take up the questions raised from this work in Chapter 2, which examines Tino Sehgal's *These Associations* (2012). In this work, unlike with *Ann Lee*, Sehgal attempts to suggest a specific mode of sociality. Identifying the problematic relationship of the individual to the collective in both capitalism and communism, in *These Associations*, Sehgal aims at investigating the possibility of the construction of a better system than both, by exploring a reconfiguration of the relationship between the individual and the collective. Chapter 2 will examine the economy of relations that Sehgal produces within the work and the work's relation to neoliberalism's production of the social.

CHAPTER 2

THESE ASSOCIATIONS, THIS ECONOMY

[T]he system of objects...cannot be described scientifically²⁷ unless it is treated in the process as the result of the continual intrusion of a system of practices into a system of techniques...[T]he description of the system of objects cannot be divorced from a critique of that system's practical ideology (Baudrillard, 2005, p. 9)

This chapter will examine Tino Sehgal's work *These Associations* (2012), which I encountered as both a participant and as a spectator. I will first offer an account of the work from my experience in each role, and discuss the work's rationale and process of creation, including the theoretical influences on it as articulated by Sehgal and as evidenced by the work itself. I will then discuss the context of its presentation – the museum. Finally, I will examine the work's production of sociality. The work, concerned with the reconfiguration of the relationship of the individual to the collective, proposed a mode of sociality that emphasised the importance of relationships and of spending time with others; of 'the production of time and attention instead of material objects' (Sehgal, 2012). Drawing on the thinking of Michel Foucault, Dave Elder-Vass, Hannah Arendt, Richard Sennett and Nicolas Bourriaud, I argue that the work's potential to effect change evaporated. I suggest that this was because the work, soon after its opening, ceased to perform its own philosophy *vis-a-vis* the relationships it produced within the work, between the maker, his collaborator and the participants. I argue that this was a result of a shift from the work's 'care' to the work's 'management', which ruptured the ethos and therefore sociality of the work. I suggest that this shift can be articulated as a shift in the work's social structure from an *association* to an *organisation* that reflected and reproduced neoliberal governmentality and

²⁷ 'Scientifically' here – possibly a translation issue – has the meaning of studying systematically / of systematic research.

rationalities such as personal responsibility and self-care. I conclude with questioning the unavoidability of such an occurrence in our current economy and point out the importance of 'further action', of keeping promises and of practices of solidarity.²⁸

**1. 'People were really open and chatty today at the Turbine Hall' –
*These Associations: A Work in Camouflage***

You enter Tate Modern from the river entrance and, especially if it is a rainy day or a weekend, it is packed with people. In an effort to avoid them you continue walking straight towards the bridge, where there is more room to breathe and to convince yourself that coming to Tate Modern on such a busy day was a good idea. You realise that people are standing on the left rail of the bridge looking down, and you (perhaps) remember Ai Weiwei's *Sunflower Seeds* (2011).²⁹ You think to yourself, 'Oh, there must be an installation in the Hall again' and you join the standing crowd in looking down from the bridge. To your disappointment, there is no installation. You start wondering what in the world these people are looking at. As you are making fun of them, the lights in the whole of the Turbine Hall turn off one by one. There is a weird mix of silence and chattering. You start wondering whether there is a power outage. Then one of the lights at the second floor balcony flickers on. In the same moment, a group of people begin melodically speaking the words 'Electric' and 'Electricity' every time a light comes on. The lights all turn off again, and this 'electric' singing is repeated three times. By the third repetition, you

²⁸ Parts of this chapter were first published in an article with *Performance Research* (Paramana, Katerina. 2014. 'On Resistance through Ruptures and the Rupture of Resistances', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 19(6), 81-89. Accessible at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2014.985112>).

²⁹ Presented also as part of the *Unilever Series* at Tate Modern's Turbine Hall October through May 2011 (Tate Modern, 2011).

realise that each sung word corresponds to a different light being illuminated, but this does not diminish your sense of awe: you are still looking around like a kid at the Christmas tree lights. All lights turn off again and then you hear some weird humming from the east end of the Hall. As your eyes adjust to the darkness, you begin to make out figures standing and sitting in the Hall. 'They are producing this sound!', you think, and perhaps you decide to stick around. You then notice people moving among the singing people in the Hall and you think that doing the same might be interesting also, perhaps even fun. You slowly walk down the stairs and start walking towards 'them'. You start being able to decipher words when you move close enough. You decide to stand for a bit next to one, hoping to listen to the whole song. You choose to stand between the young woman and man who are making beautiful harmonies together. They sing:

To-to-to-to-day-day-day-day we-we-we-we haaaaave.... beeguun to-to-to creaaate... To-day we have begun to creaaaaate...naturaal, naturaall, naturaal... pro-pro-pro-pro-ce-ce-ce-ce-cess...oooof our oooooown. And. In. In. Insteaaaaaad of. Suroooooooooounding. The woooooooooorld with. De-de-de-fences-fences-fences, de-de-fences-fences, de-de-fences, defences, de-de-fences against. Nature's, nature's, nature's...e-le-men-ta-ry foooooooooorces. We-we-we-we haaaave...channeled, channeled, channeled, channeled, channeled. These foooooooooorces. Into the woooooooooorld. We have chan-neled these forces into the woooooooooorld. Itself.

Which spoken sounds like this:

Today we have begun to create, natural processes of our own. And instead of surrounding the world with defences against nature's elementary forces, we have channelled these forces into the world itself.

And having picked up some of the song and looked it up online when you got home – assuming you were curious enough and remembered a phrase or two – you realise that it comes from this:

Today we have begun to 'create', as it were, that is, to unchain natural processes of our own which would never have happened without us, and instead of carefully surrounding the human artifice with defences against nature's elementary forces, keeping them as far as possible outside the man-made world, we have channelled these forces, along with their

elementary power, into the world itself (Hannah Arendt, 1998 [1958], *The Human Condition*, pp. 148-149).

Of course, you do not know all this at the time. You have only picked up some phrases – ‘today we have to begun to create’, ‘processes of our own’, ‘nature’s elementary forces’, ‘defences’. The words sound perhaps somewhat familiar but you just accept them for what they are. There is something magnetic about what is happening. It looks like something between a collective meditation of individuals (not like in mosques though – people are facing in different directions, they are sitting, standing, lying down, they are looking out or to other people or they are introverted) and a magic forest of trees that have come to life. You say to yourself that you will leave soon, but you find yourself sticking around.

The lights gradually come on; suddenly all the ‘trees’ walk quickly to other visitors and start speaking to them, which they do for about a minute. Then they move away and just stand next to other visitors. It is now difficult to separate who is part of the work and who is not – well perhaps you can from the trainers that you had noticed many of the ‘trees’ wearing and from the uncomfortable giggle of some of the visitors when the animated ‘trees’ stood casually next to them. The running away and standing next to visitors is followed by some strange side walking, then by some strange accelerating backwards walking up the ramp. When they reach the top, they all turn around and start walking down the ramp backwards. They start singing again:

Thus, thus, thus, thus. Thus, thus. thus, thus. Thus, thus, thus we; thus, thus, thus we ask; thus, thus, thus we ask now! Even if the oooold. Even if the oooooold, even if the oooooold. Roo-ted-nessss. Roo-ted-nessss. Is being looooooost. Iiiin thiiiis aaaaaage. May, maaaaay. May, maaaaay. May may not a neeeew. May, may not a neeew, neeew. May, may not a neeew, neeew, neeewww. Groooooound, groooooound, groooooound. Beeee creeee-aaaaa-teeeeed. Out. Of. whiiichchch. Humans’, humans’, humans’. Humans’, humans’, humans’, humans’, humans’ humans’, humans’, nature.

And all all all their works, works, works, works. All all all their works, works, works, works, works, works, works, works, can flou-flou-flou-flou-rish-wish-wish-wish, flou-flou-flou-flou-rish-wish-wish-wish, flou-flou-flou-flou-rish-wish-wish-wish- wish-wish-wish- wish-wish... Eee-vouaaaaan iiiiiin the. Teeee-chnouaaaaaaa-looo-ggggi-cal age.... Eee-vouaaaaan iiiiiin the. Teeee-chnouaaaaaaa-looo-ggggi-cal age.... Eee-vouaaaaan iiiiiin the. Teeee-chnouaaaaaaa-looo-ggggi-cal age.... Eee-vouaaaaan iiiiiin the. Teeee-chnouaaaaaaa-looo-ggggi-cal age.... Eee-vouaaaaan iiiiiin the. Teeee-chnouaaaaaaa-looo-ggggi-cal age....

Which spoken sounds like this:

Thus we ask now: even if the old rootedness is being lost in this age, may not a new ground be created out of which humans' nature and all their works can flourish even in the technological age?

And, again, if curious enough to look it up at home, you realise that it comes from this:

Thus we ask now: even if the old rootedness is being lost in this age, may not a new ground and foundation be granted again to man, a foundation and ground out of which man's nature and all his works can flourish in a new way even in the atomic age? (Martin Heidegger, 1966 [1959], *Discourse on Thinking*, p. 53).

At this point, you are wondering what the performers said to visitors and are of two minds – at once curious and terrified – about the prospect of one of them coming and talking to you. Before you finish this thought, one of them – a young man – approaches you, and you feel a rush of adrenaline. He shares a personal story with you. (Repeating it now feels a bit wrong, because you are exposing something personal, something that belongs to somebody else. You are also afraid that you do not remember it precisely and that you will communicate many of the details incorrectly). He explains that some years ago he felt really out of place and synch with himself and he took a trip to South Asia, where some locals helped him with his broken down bike and offered him their hospitality, and somehow, for the first time ever in his life, he felt at home; he had a sense of belonging.

During this exchange you begin feeling a bit awkward, but he is very relaxed and open and makes you feel the same way. You really enjoy his story, although you keep wondering whether it is real or scripted. It feels 'really real', but you know that this is a performer. You trust that there is an element of truth in what he says because in the moment it feels like he is sharing something important. And it makes you think of a moment when, if ever, you had a sense of belonging. You recount that memory in your head while you are listening to his, but you are not sure whether to share it with him. Just as you decide to share your story, a huge group of people run by you, and your newly made friend quickly stands up, smiles at you and joins the running crowd. You quickly snap out of your previous reflective mode as your gaze is directed outwards to this crazy group of people, running, playing games with each other, forming configurations, moving from the one side of the Hall to the other. You slowly realise that none of what they are doing is random; that this is a very specific choreography and that people are playing games with specific rules. You watch long enough to realise that you understand the rules and the thought pops into your head that you should join them. One of the performers happens to look at you and you think – 'well, that must be a sign' and before you know it you stand up and you join this swarm of people that breaks into trios that try to form triangles and other configurations with each other. About half an hour has passed and you start getting tired and you are slowing down, but you are thinking 'this was so much fun!' You stand by the wall and sit down. Not long has passed and that young woman that looked at you before is walking towards you. She sits next to you, smiling, and tells you this story about moving to another country for her partner, how happy they were and how, suddenly, he became sick, and died, and how in the weirdest way, she felt

a sense of arrival at that moment; of an arrival in a different universe, one in which she did not recognise herself and her surroundings and had to reconfigure everything from the beginning. You were saddened by her story, you thought that she was too young to have experienced this, but the way she talked about it showed how mature she had become because of it; and, surprisingly, the way she articulated the experience and the arrival was in some way optimistic; the arrival, although clearly unhappy, was at the same time a new beginning; a departure. You felt the need to talk to her, although you had been talking to her with your eyes all along, but you were afraid that she would disappear like the other guy. Yet she stayed and asked you about your arrivals: 'do you always think of arrivals as positive things?' You were surprised, but glad that you could engage with her. She seemed to be one of those people you could talk with for hours. You had a great, quite philosophical conversation and at some point she put her hand on your knee, looked at you and started leaving walking backwards with the rest of the group that was disappearing into the Hall as it slowly went dark.

This description is of the work *These Associations* by Tino Sehgal, presented at Tate Modern from July through October 2012. Of course 'you', the reader, did not have *this* experience. Like with *Ann Lee*, where I used 'I' to describe my experience of the work, the pronoun 'you' here aims at already establishing the relationship that I suggest the work created. With the pronoun 'you', I want to emphasise, as I will elaborate in the pages that follow, that the work's sociality in the end placed emphasis on the individual instead of her relationship to the collective, which was the work's concern. The description of the work I offered at the beginning of this chapter is of a hypothetical spectator of the work: one

that did not know in advance about the work's taking place or the artist that created it, but was surprised by it, who chose to stick around and give it time, and perhaps left in some way changed. In actuality, this description is an amalgamation of my own experience of the work: as a participant in it during the regular opening hours of the museum,³⁰ along with about 250 other participants (about 70 participants in each four-hour shift), as a spectator of the work, as well as a spectator of spectators. Of course, most of the visitors were not like this hypothetical spectator; some – like one reviewer who I observed while participating – had too much prior knowledge about the work, and persistently expected answers to their questions about its making and about you (the participant); the Frieze London Art Fair visitors, respectfully at least, analysed your every move and word; some, as I overheard during my participation in the work, too impatient to give time to it, 'saw nothing but some people running around'; some were annoyed by people delaying them in their hurry to get to the last day of the Damien Hirst exhibition; some were affected by the encounters with the participants, but did not even realize that they were part of a work; and some, yes, some looked at me like I was crazy when I started talking to them and ran off; and some kept coming back; the same day, or days later; by themselves or with friends.

Participating in *These Associations* was the richest experience I have had

³⁰ Although Tate Modern is referred to as an art gallery, it is an exempt charity run by a board of trustees (Tate 2014) and its primary function is to collect and exhibit artworks – as opposed to exhibit and sell art which is the primary function of an art gallery strictly defined. For this reason the Tate galleries fall under the definition of 'museum' as agreed by the Museums Association (2014). Tino Sehgal presents his work in museums (according to the aforementioned definition) because his work draws its strength from the museum's history, function and the discourse surrounding it. It is therefore important that 'museum' instead of 'art gallery' is used in discussing his work and why I intentionally do so here and throughout this thesis.

collaborating as a performer in a work. We – the participants – were recruited over the course of about a year, mainly through workshops (I was asked to join the project after a workshop in June 2011), but also through personal conversations with Sehgal and his collaborator as they sought replacements during the course of the work's presentation to replace participants who had left the project. The majority continued to participate for various reasons and with varying frequency. These 250 individuals were asked to join the project because they/we fulfilled the needs of the work: we represented a cross section of society (students, scientists, craftspeople, philosophers, artists, psychologists, lawyers, writers, teachers, accountants, herbalists, dramaturges, unemployed thinkers, museum guards, and so forth of different ages and ethnicities) and were 'intelligent and sensitive to others' (Sehgal, 11 June 2012). Participating in this work afforded me the opportunity to observe closely – and from different perspectives – the economy of relations produced by an artwork and how these relations affect its potential to effect change outside its frame as an artwork.

2. 'I've always had a soft spot for revolutions'

Sometimes, while I participated in the work during rehearsals and its first days of presentation, and despite all the people around me – the other participants, the other Tate employees, the visitors and often Sehgal – I would shift into an introspective mode, almost as if in meditation. The repetitive nature of the work, as well as its demanding physicality, both enabled and often required this. When in this mode, at about the same part of the work, the 'casual walking', and always at the moment when we, about seventy of us, reached the top of the Turbine Hall ramp – the same thought would pop into my head: 'I've always had a soft spot for revolutions'. I found both the thought itself and its repetition quite peculiar and at

the same time pleasurable. There was so much to think about in relation to the work and so much to say about it, but, at the time, I was only able to articulate my thoughts with this phrase. The thought succinctly expressed the series of doublenesses as I experienced them in that moment: my dual role as simultaneously the doer on the ground and the observer with a bird's eye view; the experienced doubleness of time as both past and present, as well as present and future (as a hope or expectation). This temporal doubleness also mirrored my conflicting feelings at the time: disappointment with current (summer 2012) political events and optimism for change. In my head, the phrase sounded like the beginning of a biography that would go on to narrate the thrilling experiences and efforts for radical – meaning 'from the root' – change of a group of revolutionaries. It was hopeful and full of promise, because it was concerned with issues that seemed to me to be very relevant: the reconfiguration of the relationship of the individual to the collective, the rethinking of which was crucial at a time when democracy across Europe was failing and fascism was re-emerging. I will return to the work's concerns momentarily.

I remember the first time I felt the power in numbers. I was, I think, fifteen years old. The Greek government had announced a series of budget cuts in education and yet another change in the examination system for entrance into University. This change would precipitate a series of other changes in the last three years of High School education. I found the new measures and changes atrocious, catastrophic for a young person's learning process and knowledge acquisition. Although the changes would not have affected my year, I joined the protest against the new measures without my classmates. I remember being in the crowd with a group of students from my own High School, but I did not know them very well. I

remember starting to chant with them, but miserably failing. I was so overwhelmed by the mental and emotional energy around me, that a silent scream was all I could produce – and tears that I kept secretly wiping off my face.

It has been about fifteen years since then and I still have the same reaction in protests. In the piece, right at the moment when we reached the top of the Turbine Hall ramp, I experienced the same feelings – minus the silent scream and, most of the time, the tears. It is the potential for a group of people to change things that always affected and mobilised me; for a group of thinking, wanting, desiring and working towards something they believe in individuals. And this group, of the participants in Tino Sehgal's *These Associations*, felt a lot like this. However, as I will elaborate in due course, this feeling changed.

3. On *These Associations*

Sehgal points to the production of objects, the 'transformation of "nature" into supply goods', as the problem in both communism and capitalism (Sehgal cited in Hantelmann and Jongbloed, 2002, p. 91). He is therefore interested in the production of time, attention and relationships instead of the production of material objects that is conventionally the concern of the museum (Sehgal, 8 May 2012). During the rehearsal period for *These Associations*, we discussed the ideas of the project and experimented with different material for the work. Sehgal spoke about the relationship of individuals to collectives throughout history, expressing the opinion that it was problematic both in communism and in capitalism, and that the work was concerned with the reconfiguration of this relationship (Sehgal, 17 July 2012).

Jeremy Gilbert and Jodi Dean offer useful descriptions of the problematic relationship of the individual to the collective in capitalism and communism. Gilbert argues that capitalism's individualism is characterized by what he calls a 'Leviathan logic': it considers 'the individual as the basic unit of human experience', the social or the collective as 'exist[ing] purely by means of a negation and delimitation of the free activity of individuals' (2014, pp. 69–70), and 'the collective subject [as] composed of atomised individuals who relate to each other by virtue of their vertical relation to the locus of sovereignty' ('verticalism') (ibid., p. 60). According to this logic, the collective 'can... only act in a meaningful or purposeful way if its agency, rationale and intentionality are understood to be formally identical to those which define the individual subject' ('meta-individualism') (ibid., pp. 69–70). Individualist tradition conceives the individual 'as essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them' (MacPherson cited in Dean, 2013, p. 72) and understands the individual 'not as...fundamentally interconnected with others' but as 'a proprietor of capacities engaging other proprietors' (Dean, 2013, p. 72). Collectivity is therefore perceived 'only and always as a threat to personal freedom and a condition of generalised negation' (Gilbert, 2014, p. 71), and 'as stifling and oppressive or romanticized as the communitarian ground of authentic identity' (Dean, 2012, pp. 226–227). Yet, traditional communism was also characterized by 'verticalism' and 'meta-individualism'. It considered ideological homogeneity necessary (Gilbert, 2014, p. 70) and 'the social as ultimately governed and informed by a single ordering principle' (ibid., p. 93). Dean observes that the communist party and the Soviet Union were criticized for being 'overly unified, hierarchical, exclusionary, and dogmatic' (Dean, 2012, p. 207).

Dean and Gilbert, as well as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2009), have proposed some alternatives. Dean suggests that a collectivity—much like the Occupy Wall Street—needs to be characterized by ‘diversity, horizontality, individuality, inclusivity, and openness (Dean, 2012, p. 207). She emphasizes, however, that ‘the force of horizontality’ needs to be reinforced with vertical and diagonal strength, that the collectivity needs to ‘attune itself to the facts of leadership’ (ibid., p. 209), and trust its ‘desire for collectivity’ (ibid., p. 224). Hardt and Negri propose a redefinition of the term ‘multitude’ as a ‘constant process of metamorphosis grounded in the common’ (2009, p. 173). Gilbert, building on Hardt and Negri’s thinking, understands the ‘multitude’ as a ‘collectivity which empowers but does not suppress the singularity of its constituent elements’ (Gilbert, 2014, pp. 201–202), that is capable of exercising political agency’ and is ‘neither composed of individuals nor itself constitutes a meta-individual’, but is instead ‘a potentially infinite network of singularities’ (p. 98).

During workshops, Sehgal emphasized the importance of maintaining individuality while in collectives that try to achieve something together and the need to rethink the relationship of the individual to the collective in society (Sehgal, 8 May 2012). Most who participated in the work understood that this was what it was trying to do: to question, experiment with and physically articulate, within our small collective in the Turbine Hall, a reconfiguration of the relationship of the individual to the collective that would gesture towards this reconfiguration in society. This concern was addressed, for example, through the walking and running variations that reflected different understandings and physical manifestations of collectives across history (Sehgal, 17 July 2012). It was also addressed through spending time together as a collective, as well as with the visitors through individual encounters

(sharing personal stories on topics chosen by Sehgal) and collective ones (playing physical relational games and forming configurations that drew attention to different ways of being, relating and working together as individuals who were part of a collective). The material for these encounters were created and developed during workshops.

4. Down to the Nitty-Gritty

Work-shopping

The importance of knowing the rules of the game – and knowing first and foremost what kind of game you are playing – was my first affinity with the work of Sehgal. In the workshop period of *These Associations*, Sehgal shared with us his father's experience with the 'game' of working in a corporation some years ago. His father – quite secure financially at the time – worked for IBM, but the rules of the corporate game he was part of changed. His unfamiliarity with the rules cost him – and Sehgal – to lose their savings. This experience, along with Sehgal's studies in economics, had influenced his interest in the type of work he made and also the type of games we played and constructed during the workshop period: physical relational games, dependant upon clear rules made by Sehgal or ourselves upon a bigger given structure.

Making the work in a short time frame was made possible by two things. First, by the fact that Sehgal and his producer had already been selecting participants over the course of a year. Second, by the nature of Sehgal's work in general: work that is highly conceptual and, as he explains, like basketball, is based on 'a balance of a few good rules' that have been well thought-through, allowing everything else to be a matter of their execution (Sehgal, June 2012).

As Sehgal himself noted, the ‘work-shops’ were more about ‘shopping’ than ‘working’, for the time – and money – available to him from *Unilever* – one of Tate’s Corporate Sponsors (*Tate: Current Corporate Members*, 2014) – to get this work ready to be presented was limited. (If I remember correctly he only had thirteen days available in the Turbine Hall to get the piece on its feet). The word ‘shopping’ then, with its commodity production, circulation and consumption connotations, seemed to me to be part of the work in the very early days of its inception.

The workshop days had the purpose of ‘auditioning’ participants – how they articulated themselves; how they related to the work and to other potential participants; how interesting their conceits (the stories they were to share with spectators) were; how well they could communicate non-verbally; how physical they could be; how strategic and inventive they could be in terms of their game making and playing – and of ‘shopping’ material for Sehgal. Although we were not paid for the workshops, they were the most interesting part of the experience of working in this piece and for Sehgal. The workshop days (about a week per workshop) were the time when the ‘rules of the game’ – of the participation in the work – were established, when the concept of the work materialised in a choreography of games and when the relationships and ethics of encounter between the participants, Sehgal and his collaborator, Asad Raza, were produced.

Walks, Runs, Triangles, Swarms, Configurations and Songs and other Turbine Hall Animals

All the games we played explored in different ways, ways of being, relating and working with one another as participants in the work (but also outside the Turbine

Hall in our personal, social or working relationships): they examined the relationship of an individual to the collective. In the following, I describe some of the games we played and their purpose.

Triangles. This was one of the core games that consisted of – as did the work as a whole – many variations. The rules of this game were: at count one, while walking around the space, choose one person and keep her in sight; at count two, choose a second person – keep both this and the first person in your eyesight; at count three (*Triangles 3*), form with these two players an equidistant triangle relationship in the space, maintaining it at all times. (This, depending on what other people in the group are doing, will require of you to stand still, just walk or run at full speed). On count four (*Triangles 4*) continue playing the game but now keep the same player always as the left point of your triangle and the other always as the right. (This will further limit your options, making the task even harder). In a variation of the game, after *Triangles 4* you must try to be as close as possible to one of your triangle players and as far away as possible from the other (*near-far*). This rule again affects everyone in the group. As everyone has a *far* point to avoid and a *near* point to try to stay physically closest to, swirls are created around certain people. This separates the group (usually) into three distinct swirling groups. In this variation, as soon as these three groups are formed, the task is to then move with your group to the other side of the Turbine Hall. There you play *Meta-triangles: Triangles 3* as groups (this time each group – instead of an individual – becomes one of the three points of a triangle). The largest of the three groups needs to have travelled first to the other side of the Hall and its goal is to play triangles with the other two groups. The other two groups' goal is to sabotage its efforts by not allowing it to form with them a triangle relationship.

This, like all of the other games, was relational. One player's actions influenced the other players' strategy and actions. An experienced and intelligent player learns to develop strategies to control her situation: choosing carefully her triangle players, positioning herself in a certain way in the space to avoid running or to make others need to run. The simplicity of the rules allowed this game to function well and the spectators, who spent some time observing it, to 'read' the rules. However, except for the individual goals of every player, there were collective ones: satisfying the work's need to move to the next part – the next sequence – or at a different place in space – the other side of Turbine Hall. If we were to look at the game from a 'game theory' perspective – a method of studying strategic³¹ situations often applied to economics, politics, law, biology, evolution theory and sport – although individuals' payoffs were about achieving the task as best as they could, the larger objective was to at the same time advance the choreography by completing the sequence and moving on to the next game (Polack, 2007). This often required the prioritisation of the movement of the group as a whole instead of maintaining one's individual strategy that allowed for the individual to play the game better than others or simply complete her individual task. Although the structure of the game remained the same, the individual payoffs from the game changed because of the desire of the collective to fulfil the needs of the work of art. This movement – from oneself to the group, from the awareness of your physical self to the awareness of your self in relation to individuals around you and to the whole of the group – this zooming in and out, was demanded by the work and what I found most important conceptually. This was also the game that most dramatically

³¹ '[S]trategic...[a]s a setting where the outcomes that affect you depend on actions, not just on your own actions, but on actions of others' (Polack, 2007).

demonstrated the need to consider ourselves in relation to others and to question our goals. Is this not what is imperative in the contemporary moment?

Cells was a game that incorporated both *Triangles* and the *Own Rule* games, but with added parameters. The *Own Rule* game, as the name indicates, required each participant to make up their own rule about the manner in which they moved in the space in relation to the space or other participants. It was important that the 'culture' of the piece was maintained: there was to be no gestural or emotive movements, no use of objects, no dancing or talking. If one watched enough, it became possible to decipher the rule that determined how one moved in the space and how she related to others due to the rule. Unlike the *Own Rule*, *Cells* was a group game, as three or four people needed to collaborate even though they had different objectives. The cell – a small group of four people – was to burst out into the Hall from the employee entrance at the Hall's east end and immediately start playing the game. The game's rules were relatively consistent for all cells, but the roles of each player were decided by Sehgal or one of his collaborators right before the group ran out of that room. Group members two and three were always the two points of a triangle. Group member one's goal was to play triangles with members two and three – trying to maintain an equidistant relationship with them – while also always facing group member four. Four's role was to make member one's task as hard as possible (this was also the goal of members two and three) and at the same time follow a rule of their own making or one that was given to her moments before. In terms of rules and their abiding by them, this was perhaps the most complex game we played. One needed to be constantly alert, aware and strategizing in order to achieve her objective as a player, especially when the other players were good at strategizing to make her task as hard as possible. The lack of

a collective goal for this game made it competitive and performing it was exhausting.

Swarming with average direction was a game that exemplified the requirement of the players to always actively take into consideration their objective and its relation to the objective of the group as a whole. In this game, the group's goal was to swarm like a flock of birds – this was not a 'follow the leader' game – whilst each individual's goal was to simultaneously pay attention to where most individuals were heading, assess the average direction of the two most heavily populated directions and follow it. I found it useful to think of this as a game of vectors where one had to find the average vector, but the number of people that followed each vector was a consideration that influenced your decision of what the average direction was. The game was also visually intriguing, especially when the speed increased. Playing with speed and the dynamics of the games was something Sehgal was interested in, as putting pressure on the game allowed for its limits and limitations to become visible (Sehgal, June 2012).

Of interest to me in this particular game were the reasons why, often, the aforementioned rules were not followed (this was the case for different reasons with all the games). Especially in the presentation days of the work, it became obvious that, except for the instances when people were too tired to maintain the speed of the group and therefore ignored the objective of swarming close to each other, the popularity of an individual influenced whether the group would allow her to either change or influence the speed or direction of the group. In order for the work to maintain its dynamic, it was often necessary that some people broke slightly away from the group to give its movement momentum by changing its

direction or rhythm. Despite the fact that maintaining the momentum was a collective objective, often the personal objectives of staying at a certain speed or of refusing to give the 'break-away' person the power to influence the group's direction or speed was prioritised.

To walk the walk

Along with the games, the work consisted of three walking patterns performed at a gradually accelerating or decelerating speed, as well as songs and conversations. These were not exempt from rules.

Equidistant stepping, in its accelerating variation, started with all participants standing on the east side of the Hall equally spaced from each other so that there were not any big gaps nor too small distances between the participants. In a relatively synchronised manner, the performers were to take one step at a time maintaining these distances from one another. This required that each participant was both aware of where she decided to move and also alert to where other people moved. The movement pattern was to be executed in as casual and smooth manner as possible, even as the movement was accelerated from stepping, to walking casually, to walking quickly and to running. As the movement accelerated, the distance amongst the players shrunk, making maintaining an equal distance from one another quite a task. The metaphor here, for me, is quite obvious: co-existing with others, respecting their boundaries and freedoms while still working together in a specific time and space even when pressures – in this case due to speed – increased. Yet it also pointed towards the importance of the awareness required to achieve such a task and the consequences of failing at it; often times a participant

would get a bit too excited in the acceleration mode, loose awareness of her position relative to other people, and bump into someone. As such failures were expected, it was important to recover from these moments with minimum emoting and verbal communication.

The *Tenderness Game* followed the end of the accelerating sequence. This was similar to a game known as 'freeze'. Walking around, always making eye contact with the other performers and spectators that might have joined in the group, the performer had to choose two people from the group and remember who was number one and who was number two. If the performer happened to make eye contact with number one, she would have to freeze. The only way to begin moving again was to manage to make eye contact with number two. The *Tenderness Game* pointed to both the importance of attention to others, but also to our interdependence.

Walking. Large sections of the work involved walking across the Hall as a group that spanned the entire width of the Hall. We were to start a few lines deep, but without forming any kind of line formation. We all walked in the same direction, but our walking mode was to be casual in order to avoid any visual reference to a parade or march. We were to think of ourselves as individuals walking in a group, yet maintain the same movement rhythm as the group. This was what Sehgal would refer to in talks as a more 'classical configuration', but one that was opposed to the aesthetics of movement of an army parade of any kind. This was not a group that had a singular vision (which was what Sehgal considered to be what was imposed by totalitarian political systems), but was one that moved in the same direction and with the same speed (Sehgal, June 2012). The walking began almost

imperceptibly, starting in the dark³² and slowly being lit by the Turbine Hall lights. The lights would come on one by one as we reached specific points in the space. Over the course of twenty minutes what began as an imperceptible walk accelerated into high speed running. During this time period – as at any point in the piece – participants could leave the group and talk to a visitor (I will return to this momentarily). This walking pattern was also reversed: for example, high-speed running would come out of swarming and slowly decelerate to the imperceptible walking. This was often followed by a *Configuration* across the Hall: one by one the participants would ‘fall out’ of the group and stand or sit across the length of the Hall. The configuration was an emptying out of the Hall from high-energy, a wiping the palate clean of preceding movement and of recuperating physical strength for the participants.

All the games, walks and configurations – along with their variations – were part of different sequences of the work that also varied in the order performed. The last two ingredients of the work were the *Conceits*, which took place throughout the work at moments decided upon or chosen by the participants, and the *Singing* of philosophy, which took place at specific moments of the sequence.

To Talk the Talk: Conceiting the visitors

Often in the duration of the piece a participant would approach a visitor and have a conversation with her. These were not random conversations, but based on a subject designated by the work. The name for such a conversation was *conceit*,

³² The slow walk sometimes scared visitors. This seemed to be the case because some participants, while concentrating on walking slowly, held their breath, which made them appear like zombies (Pope, 2012).

defined as 'excessive pride in oneself', 'an ingenious or fanciful comparison or metaphor' and 'an artistic effect or device and a fanciful notion' (*Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2014a). Sehgal considered the conceit both an artistic device and a metaphor, and spoke about it as giving 'a gift' to the visitor (Sehgal, 17 July 2012). For Sehgal, the conceit was to remain an ambiguous moment: its directness and content made visitors experience it as something simultaneously 'real' and artificial – a personal story, but also one that is part of a work of art (ibid.). Delivering a conceit was not an easy task; it required a repository of mental energy. One needed to consider the appropriate moment in the piece to deliver a conceit, who to deliver it to, which conceit to deliver and how to deliver it. The performer also needed to be ready for a vast array of reactions to her conceit: from a welcoming attitude, to a beginning of a wonderful conversation, to sheer fear on the part of the visitor who was approached, to her abandonment by the visitor for several reasons, to persistent questions about herself or the work, to the making of a friend through a thoughtful and often quite emotional conversation. Giving conceits always felt like a 'risky business' and that is before even taking into consideration the emotional state or physical and mental fatigue of the participant. And it was such a 'risky business' because what the performer was delivering was not a pre-written text, somebody else's story. Neither was she delivering the conceit as someone other than herself. This was a moment of exposing oneself and becoming vulnerable to a stranger through the sharing of an important moment in your life. Delivering a conceit ranged from an interesting, to a boring, to a tremendously fulfilling or almost traumatic experience.

Depending on the visitor and the conceit one had delivered, a participant could introduce a visitor to another participant after her own conceit. There was a caring

attitude towards the visitor for this: a participant had to consider what kind of story the visitor had just listened to and who would be the right person to listen to after her. Often, when a participant encountered a visitor that she personally knew, she would not approach them, but would send another participant to talk to them, either because she knew that their story would somehow benefit the visitor to listen to or because they thought that an interesting conversation might ensue between the two.

Like all aspects of the work, the conceits had rules. They had to be personal stories that were real, not invented. They were not to be initiated with an introduction of any kind – ‘hello’, ‘how are you?’ or ‘my name is’ – nor were they to end with a ‘thank you’, ‘goodbye’ or ‘have a good day’. The conceits were meant to be ruptures in both the work and, most importantly, the visitor’s everyday or usual mode of spectatorship, which social niceties would simply smooth out. The topics of the conversations were to be chosen from seven available options and were to avoid any discussion about the work or art in general. They could be delivered whole or incomplete and if a visitor insisted on discussing topics that were to be avoided, a participant could use the title of the piece ‘This is *These Associations* by Tino Sehgal’ to end the conversation before leaving the visitor.

The seven topics from which each participant chose a story, or a number of different personal stories, to share were the following: ‘a moment in your life when you felt a sense of arrival’; ‘a moment in your life when you had a sense of belonging’; ‘something that you are satisfied with yourself’; ‘something that you are dissatisfied with yourself’; ‘a quality in a friend that you admire’; ‘a moment in your life when you felt overwhelmed’; giving a compliment to a visitor. In none of

these cases was the topic to be announced or introduced; the story was simply to be shared. Of course, there was nothing simple about this or about the experience of it. Although there were control mechanisms – the rules – for the conceits, it was up to each participant to choose what was to be delivered and how. This required an enormous amount of trust of the participants on Sehgal's part, as these conversations were simultaneously the window into the work and its most important yet vulnerable moment. And due to the individual experience offered, it resulted in a range of feedback from the audience. But this was also the most vulnerable moment for the participant. And although there were rules to protect the work or the participant from any kind of harassment by a visitor, emotional bruising – like the physical bruising resulting from the physical demands of the work³³ – was not always something that could be avoided.

To Sing the Quote: Singing Philosophy

The work's concerns were most explicitly addressed through our singing of quotes from Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger (the two influences on Sehgal he mentioned to us during the workshop days) that had been slightly altered to relate to our contemporary moment. In bold below are the texts that were sung:

Thus we ask now: even if the old rootedness is being lost in this age, may not a new ground and foundation **be** granted [Sehgal = **created**] again to man, a foundation and ground **out of which** man's [Sehgal = **humans'**] **nature and all** his [Sehgal = **their**] **works can flourish** in a new way **even in the** atomic [Sehgal = **technological**] **age?** (Heidegger, 1966, p. 53)

Today we have begun to 'create', as it were, that is, to unchain **natural processes of our own** which would never have happened without us, **and instead of** carefully **surrounding** the human artifice [Sehgal = **the world**] **with defences against nature's elementary forces,** keeping them as far

³³ A great deal can be written on the relation to, demands and effects of the work on the body of the performer. However, the focus of this chapter, and of the thesis as a whole, is on the social relations that the work produced.

as possible outside the man-made world, **we have channelled these forces**, along with their elementary power, **into the world itself**. (Arendt, 1998, pp. 148– 149)

During the workshops we started learning two songs. At the time I was not aware at all what we were singing as we were learning the quotes as songs, or as sounds I should say, which often prevented me from understanding the content of what I was learning. It gradually became apparent that the two songs were quotations from Arendt's *The Human Condition* (1958) and Heidegger's *Discourse on Thinking* (1959). In the same manner as the work as a whole went to great lengths to camouflage itself as a work of art, giving the visitor more the more time she spent with it, the songs went to great lengths to obscure their identities as philosophical quotations, revealing themselves as such to the visitor through repetition – through the time the visitor spent listening. I nevertheless do not feel that one needed to know the texts from which the quotations originated in order to find value in their existence as part of the work or in order to understand the work. Sehgal would not have assumed their necessity and at the same time made a work in which it was highly unlikely that a visitor would get the chance to hear them. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this text and the discussion around the work's conceptual framework, it is important that I discuss the quotations and their relation to the work's emphasis on immateriality and on relationships.

(Heidegger)

Although, the quotations were altered, I will first discuss them as they appear in the original text. As indicated above, Sehgal has replaced some words (and has omitted some phrases): 'granted' has been replaced by 'created', 'man's' by 'humans' 'his' by 'their' and 'atomic' by 'technological'.

In *Discourse on Thinking* (1966 [1959]), Heidegger explains that, in the modern world 'applied science and calculative thinking have dominated our lives', weakening the importance of a ground of meaning. It is therefore, he believes, high time that we 'renew[ed] the search for a new ground of meaning' however difficult this task might be (p. 20). In his explanation, Heidegger opposes *calculative thinking* to what he considers is required of us: *meditative thinking*. He argues that in *calculative thinking* we deal with things based on terms for our advantage (pp. 23-24). *Calculative thinking* 'races from one prospect to the next...never stops, never collects itself' (p. 46). *Meditative thinking* on the other hand is 'thinking which contemplates the meaning which reigns in everything that is' (p. 46). It 'does not construct a world of objects... it is thinking which allows content to emerge within awareness' (pp. 23-24), a thinking which is 'an opening to what is beyond the horizon of such knowing' and 'consists in becoming aware of the horizon as such, that is, as an opening out and so as standing open' (pp. 28-29).

In the text that precedes the quote sung in the work, Heidegger explains that the relationship of man to that which exists is determined by 'the power concealed in modern technology', by the enormous 'sources of power that have become known through the discovery of atomic energy' (1966 [1959], pp. 50-51). He believes that because the forces of technology have not been made by man, they have 'moved long since beyond his will and have outgrown his capacity for decision' (ibid.). His concern is not necessarily with the world becoming completely technical, but with the possibility that man is unable to meditatively confront this transformation; for Heidegger supports that no one can control the progress of history in the atomic age. His fear is that man may become utterly defenceless in the face of the power of

technology if he does not 'pit meditative thinking decisively against merely calculative thinking' (pp. 52-53).

In the quote sung in the work ('Thus we ask now ...'), Heidegger suggests that the answer to the question about what the new ground and foundation for the new autochthony could be is meditative thinking, which demands of us to examine both sides of an idea as well as multiple courses of ideas; which 'demands of us that we engage ourselves with what at first sight does not go together at all' (p. 53). Although he acknowledges that technology has its positive aspects, he points out that we need only ensure that we do not allow the technical devices to dominate us (pp. 53-54) for technology can change our relation to things – to nature and to the world. He calls for an attitude that 'enables us to keep open to the meaning hidden in technology', for finding a 'new ground and foundation upon which we can stand and endure in the world of technology without being imperilled by it' (pp. 55-56).

(Arendt)

In what precedes the quotation of interest ('Today we have begun to 'create'... we have channelled these forces, along with their elementary power, into the world itself' – Arendt, pp. 148-149), Arendt discusses the two first stages of modern technology's developments (the first being the steam engine and the second the use of electricity) in terms of their relation to natural forces and processes. She emphasises that, unlike with the steam engine where natural processes were imitated and natural forces used for human purposes, with electricity 'we no longer use material as nature yields it to us, killing natural processes or interrupting or imitating them', but that:

[t]oday we have begun to 'create', as it were, that is, to unchain natural processes of our own which would never have happened without us, and

instead of carefully **surrounding** the human artifice [Sehgal = **the world**] **with defences against nature's elementary forces**, keeping them as far as possible outside the man-made world, **we have channelled these forces**, along with their elementary power, **into the world itself** (Arendt, 1998 [1958], *The Human Condition*, p. 148-149).

The 'electric' singing in Sehgal's work points to this stage of technological development – the use of electricity – that led through industrialisation to the formation of cities and to our absolute dependence on electricity.

Eeeeeeelectric. Eeeeeeelectric. Eeeeeeelectriiiiiiiiity!

Arendt believes that 'the channelling of natural forces into the human world', as with electricity and automation – the third stage of technological development – has changed our understanding of the world's purposefulness: that 'objects are the ends for which tools and implements are designed'. But she argues that this is a misunderstanding in itself, as the tool-maker *homo faber* did not primarily invent tools and implements to aid the 'human life process' but to 'erect a world'. She concludes that the problem lies, not in whether the machines have enslaved us, but in whether 'the machines still serve the world and its things' or 'they and the automatic motion of their processes have begun to rule and even destroy world and things' (Arendt, pp. 150-153).

Arendt believes in the human capacity for action and in – like Heidegger's urging for meditative thinking – our ability to 'to think what we are doing' (Canovan in Arendt, 1998, p. xvii). However, unlike Heidegger, she believes that hope in human affairs comes from the fact that new unique people are constantly being born into the world who can therefore change the chain of events already in motion thanks to previous actors' actions (1988, p. xvii).

(Heidegger and Arendt in 'These Associations')

So what do Heidegger's and Arendt's quotations have to do with Sehgal's work? We can safely assume that the incorporation of the quotations is important to the work, despite Sehgal obscuring their origins. We can see connections to Sehgal's philosophy quite quickly. Sehgal has pointed out the problematics of materiality in today's society and he is proposing work that he considers immaterial in the material world of the museum. Within this material world Sehgal includes indirectly the technology producing it and our current attachment to material objects as something that is not only detrimental to nature, but also to human relationships. This is the reason why in Heidegger's text Sehgal has replaced 'atomic age' for the 'technological age', which continues to introduce into our lives more and more objects while also accelerating time with consequences on human relations.

Like Heidegger, Sehgal is searching for a new ground using meditative thinking and points to the history of technological development that has brought us to our current human condition and which we need to consider carefully – like both Heidegger and Arendt suggest – in order to protect our world and its things. Sehgal believes that 'the human mind-body' is still the most complex way of taking in the world (Sehgal, 17 July 2012). As I understand it, Sehgal's proposition for 'a new ground' upon which 'humans and all their works can flourish' is the re-establishment of human relationships, the slowing down of time, the spending of time with others and the production of a new kind of attention to the world and people around us that can be accomplished using 'natural processes of our own' – our capacity to be social and create relationships. Like Arendt, Sehgal seems to believe in the power of people

‘acting in concert’ (Canovan in Arendt, 1998, pp. xviii–xix) – in our case working together in the Turbine Hall and involving the visitors – to improve the human condition. He seems to have faith in the plurality of a group to act, take initiatives and create relationships in order to make the world one in which they can live.³⁴ This is of course my understanding of the work drawing on my experience of participating in it and on my interpretation of the comments that Sehgal made throughout the work’s making and presentation.

5. Insights into the Site:

Tate Modern, Turbine Hall and the Importance of the Walls that Surround Us

Tate Modern was originally the Bankside oil-fired power station, which was built between 1947-1963 and closed in 1981. The building was converted into Tate Modern by architects Herzog & de Meuron. It officially opened on 11 May 2000. It is the most-visited modern museum (art gallery) in the world, with around 4.7 million visitors per year. The Turbine Hall, which once housed the electricity generators of the old oil-fired power station, has been used to display large specially commissioned works by well-known contemporary artists (for example by Louise Bourgeois, Anish Kapoor, Miroslaw Balka and Ai Weiwei). It is five

³⁴ While participating in the work, I understood the quote to relate both to electricity as discussed above (as a stage in the technological development) as well as to the process we (Sehgal and the participants) had created. When I sang the quote with the other participants (*Today we have begun to ‘create’, natural processes of our own and instead of surrounding the world with defences against nature’s elementary forces we have channelled these forces into the world itself*), the natural processes of our own that we channelled every day into the world, into the Turbine Hall, were our capacity for being social and creating relationships and the channelling of this new understanding through the work out into the world: our new understanding of the relationship that an individual can have to a collective, our collective action of creating relationships through the work and the different perspectives that were enabled through the work; a different way of thinking, making, acting.

storeys tall and has a floor space of 3,400 square meters (Tate, 2013) and it is the space where *These Associations* was presented.

As a museum where art exhibitions are presented, Tate Modern shares characteristics with other museums both in its history, architecture, function, as well as the cultural values it furthers. Tony Bennett, in his book *The Birth of the Museum*, starts the discussion by offering Eilean Hooper-Greenhill's argument that it was the effects of the French Revolution that led to its birth.

[They] created the conditions of emergence for a new 'truth', a new rationality, out of which came a new functionality for a new institution, the public museum [...] [which] exposed both the decadence and tyranny of the old forms of control, the *ancien régime*, and the democracy and utility of the new, the Republic (Hooper-Greenhill cited in Bennett, 1995, p. 89)

The museum made public what was once only available for private view and was transformed from an instrument of display of power and control to an instrument of education (Bennett, 1995, p. 89). Nevertheless, from its nascent days, the museum was characterised by two functions that were contradictory: on the one hand, it served as the 'elite temple' of the arts, and on the other as a 'utilitarian instrument for democratic education' (ibid.). Its third function, as an 'instrument of the disciplinary society', was added later (Hooper-Greenhill cited in Bennett, 1995, p. 89). Bennett suggests that this later function was a result of the institution's division between people and therefore between spaces (its architecture): between those who functioned as the producers of knowledge, whose work took place in the hidden from public view spaces, and the consumers of knowledge, whose passive consumption took place in public view. The museum then, Bennett holds, 'became a site where bodies, constantly under surveillance, were to be rendered docile' (Bennett, 1995, p. 89).

Aiming at shedding light on the museum's political rationality, Bennett bases his account on the birth of the museum on Foucault. Specifically, he draws on Foucault's work on the emergence of new technologies that 'aim at regulating the conduct of individuals and populations – the prison, the hospital and the asylum' – and to which the 'development of modern forms of government' can be traced (Bennett, 1995, pp. 89-90). According to Foucault, Bennett explains, these technologies

are characterized by their own specific rationalities: they constitute distinct and specific modalities for the exercise of power, generating their own specific fields of political problems and relations, rather than comprising instances for the exercise of a general form of power. There is, Foucault further suggests, frequently a mismatch between the rhetorics which seemingly govern the aims of such technologies and the political rationalities embodied in the actual modes of their functioning. Where this is so, the space produced by this mismatch supplies the conditions for a discourse of reform which proves unending because it mistakes the nature of its object (Bennett, 1995, pp. 89-90).

For Bennett, 'if the space of the museum is to become more fully dialogic', it needs to function as 'a site for the enunciation of plural and differentiated statements, enabling it to function as an instrument for public debate' (1995, pp. 103-104). He suggests that this would be aided by rethinking the museum in terms of the 'political demands based on the principle of representational adequacy' as not 'an entitlement to be either entertained or instructed', but as a 'right to make active use of museum resources' (ibid., pp. 104-105).

Where Bennett sees limitations, Sehgal sees potential. Sehgal's thinking about the contemporary museum echoes that of art scholar and curator Nicolas Bourriaud. Art exhibitions, Bourriaud argues, produce 'a specific sociability' because they create 'free spaces and periods of time whose rhythms... encourage an inter-human intercourse' (2006, p. 161). Sehgal spoke about the museum's

‘contemporary sensibility’ (‘you can still talk to your friend while watching the work’), that it creates the illusion that it ‘addresses masses as individuals’ and that the Turbine Hall in particular makes the ‘opening of civic conversations’ possible because it is a transitional space (Sehgal, 8 May 2012). For Bourriaud, the artwork itself represents ‘a space in social relations’ that ‘can be a machine for provoking and managing individual or collective encounters’ – encounters Sehgal also produced – by establishing ‘relational micro-territories that could be driven into the density of the contemporary *socius*’ (2006, pp. 161–164).

6. *These Associations* and the Relationships Amongst Us / The Production of the Social in *These Associations*

Based on a philosophy about immateriality and the importance of attention to relationships and time spent together as well as a consideration of the museum as a space that ‘encourage[s] an inter-human intercourse’ (Bourriaud, 2006, p. 161), *These Associations* created a temporary collective of participants who, through their participation in the work, created ruptures in the flow of time and movement established by the museum and in the unsuspecting visitors’ trip to Tate. I perceived these ruptures as a form a resistance to the material economy of the museum, but also, due to the concerns of the work with the attention to relationships, to neoliberalism’s production of the social. The work was successful in a number of ways. For example, it received many good reviews that replicated Sehgal’s discourse – a success in itself. Alex Needham from *The Guardian* stated that ‘Sehgal created something that seemed unprecedented – a piece that you transformed by participating in, which was kaleidoscopically changing, seemed global in reach and scope, and which was infinitely generous to its audience’

(2012). Adrian Searle, also from *The Guardian*, claimed, 'These Associations is one of the best Turbine Hall commissions...It is about communality and intimacy, the self as social being, the group and the individual, belonging and separation. We're in the middle of things. It is marvellous' (2012). Ben Luke from the *London Evening Standard* felt that '[a]s soon as one of Sehgal's participants walks towards you in the Turbine Hall, you are thrust into this compelling world' (2012) and Genevieve Hassan from the *BBC News* claimed that she was certain that 'if [she] visit[ed] again [she'd] encounter something totally different – and yet still feel part of something' (2012). The work was also nominated for a Turner Prize and, most importantly, elicited good responses from visitors, whose conversations with the participants affected many of them in – as one visitor articulated to me in a conversation – a 'profound manner'. In addition, unlike much work currently made, the participants were paid, albeit at the London minimum wage. Furthermore, many participants enjoyed the experience of being part of the work and formed lasting friendships with other participants. Yet, what I considered the work's most potent resistance to neoliberalism was not realized and its greatest potential – to perform its own philosophy in the collective it created – evaporated.

With *These Associations*, it seemed to me that Sehgal's response to neoliberalism was the creation of a specific mode of sociality that emphasized the importance of relationships and of time spent together (the participants with the visitors, but also the participants with one another) as individual parts of a collective. Michel Foucault suggests that neoliberalism 'economizes' all areas of social life (2008), affecting the production of relationships, our interactions, exchanges and encounters and our relationship to time and space. Although, as I mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis, Sehgal does not accept the term 'neoliberalism' (Sehgal,

19 June 2012), the aforementioned mode of sociality that he proposed nevertheless opposed the characteristics and effects of neoliberal capitalism: the acceleration of time, the overproduction of objects, the breaking down of social relationships due to technology and the economic rationalization of social life, the emphasis on the individual and the promotion of self-care and personal responsibility. In other words, the ethics that Sehgal proposed through *These Associations* was antithetical to neoliberal ethics. Yet, I suggest that it is neoliberal ethics that the work eventually reproduced.

In the remainder of this chapter, I argue that the work's potential to effect change evaporated because the work, soon after its opening, ceased to perform its own philosophy vis-à-vis the relationships it produced within the work, between the maker, his collaborator and the participants. The work ceased to be an effective response to neoliberalism, for the extended performance of collective social relations was not realized. I argue that this was a result of a shift from the work's 'care' (where time and attention was given to the work, its concerns, the relationships it produced and the organization of its constituent parts) to the work's 'management' (where emphasis was placed on hierarchies and ensuring the execution of the work), which ruptured the ethos and therefore sociality of the work. I suggest that the shift from 'care' to 'management' and the resulting rupture of sociality can be articulated as a shift in the work's social structure from an *association* to an *organization* that reflected and reproduced neoliberal governmentality and rationalities such as personal responsibility and self-care. I maintain that this was not a natural transformation of dynamics in the group or simply a natural shift as the work moved from its rehearsal to its presentation mode, but a result of actions that opposed the work's rationale and ethos. If the

work's concern with the reconfiguration of the individual to the collective was to be enacted through the collective it created, a different kind of time and attention needed to be given to the work throughout its existence. I conclude with questioning whether such an occurrence is unavoidable in our current economy.

7. On 'Care' and Associations

Bruno Latour explains that 'the social' (from the Latin *socius*: 'a companion, an associate' with whom you ally because you have 'something in common' (2005, p. 6)), is 'a trail of associations... a type of connection between heterogeneous elements' that 'might be assembled anew in some given state of affairs'. He understands it therefore as 'a peculiar movement of reassociation and reassembling' (ibid., pp. 5-7) of the collective, which he considers not a singular entity, but a procedure of collecting through association (Latour, 2004, p. 238). The social and the collective, thus, are neither final nor concrete, but processes that need to be questioned, attended to and nourished; they need to be 'cared' for. To explain in more concrete terms the shift from the work's 'care' to its 'management', I will use the writing of sociologist Dave Elder-Vass to articulate how the work shifted from an *association* to an *organization* with neoliberal characteristics, rupturing the nature of the social on which the work was founded and therefore its resistance to neoliberalism.

Elder-Vass argues that when we talk about change, we cannot think in terms of society in general. For him, there are only groups whose specific formations result in 'causal emerging properties'. While he acknowledges the importance of who is part of the group and the mental conceptions and actions of the individuals and of the group as a whole, his focus is on its organization – on the specific set of

relations among the individuals that makes the group more than the sum of its parts – and what new properties emerge from it that the individuals did not themselves possess before entering it. These emergent properties are where Elder-Vass locates the potential to effect change (2010).

Depending on their organization, groups can form different social structures, such as *associations* and *organizations* (Elder-Vass, 2010, p. 116). An *association* is ‘a group of two or more people who have a continuing commitment to the group as such’ (ibid., p. 149). Because of this commitment,

the group can persist beyond the duration of a single social interaction situation. Its members are likely to have a sense of the group’s continuation as a group even when they are not engaged in interaction with each other and they will tend to engage in repeated interactions. One implication is that there is a degree of stability in the membership of the group over a period of time, although associations may allow some turnover of membership (Elder-Vass, 2010, p. 149).

Commitment in an *association* results from members feeling that the group ‘gives them some continuing benefit or meets some continuing need that they have’ (Elder-Vass, 2010, p. 150). The strength of commitment to the group depends on factors such as ‘the extent to which goals are perceived as shared among members of a group, the frequency of interaction between an individual and the members of the group, and the number of individual needs satisfied in the group’ (March and Simon cited in Elder-Vass, 2010, p. 150). Lastly, in an *association* ‘the tendency to accept the normative standards endorsed by the group is increased’ and the interactions ‘generate a degree of consensus about the status of the individual within [it]’ (Elder-Vass, 2010, pp. 151–152).

The social structure of *These Associations* constituted an *association* insofar as we were a group of individuals who were committed to the project over a period of

time despite the instability of our encounters in time and the length and frequency of our interactions. This commitment arose from a combination of factors, such as a) the relative financial stability it gave to some participants, b) the alliance with the work's concerns and the ideas and values upon which it was based and c) a mode of sociality that was based on time spent together in the Hall but also outside of it, on respect and the welcoming of everyone's ideas and feedback on the work, despite Sehgal's and his collaborator's directorial role. Participating in the work felt important because we were interrogating/working towards something: we were, through the work, experimenting and discovering how to be with one another, observing what happens when individuals make different decisions than the group and how we can find one another physically and metaphorically after having been separated because of these decisions.

These norms, roles and 'rules' of the exchanges and encounters between the maker of the work, his collaborator and us (the participants), had been established through an ethics of encounter and work during workshops and rehearsals. However, although they were accepted by the group and created a degree of consensus, disagreements with regards to practical aspects (for example, length of breaks and shifts), as well as the materialization and performance of conceptual aspects of the work, were expressed and heard. Even situations that were handled inappropriately (for example, when one of Sehgal's assistants censored the personal stories that participants were to share with visitors, characterizing them as 'too much' for the visitor instead of aiding participants to effectively communicate the material) were to a great extent resolved. The relations and interactions among the members of this *association* were relatively democratic and egalitarian, participatory and informal and the work was 'cared for' by giving time

and attention to the relations it produced and the concerns it interrogated. It is this 'caring' for the work and the relations it produced that, if sustained, had the potential to effect change by producing knowledge – what Elder-Vass would call 'emerging properties' – that affected our practices of being in the work that could perhaps influence such practices outside of the work.

8. On 'Management' and (Neoliberal) Organisations

Elder-Vass explains that *organizations* are a type of association, but they are more complex in at least two ways: 'they tend to be strongly structured by specialised roles' and 'are marked by significant authority relations between at least some of the roles' (2010, p. 152).

[I]t is the authority vested in those holding the managerial roles...that makes roles so strongly binding in organisations....[O]rganisations can use hierarchical control to generate the benefits of coordinated interaction.... [T]he management role includes the development of the role specifications themselves and their continuing elaboration in response to the goals, performance and circumstances of the organisation (Elder-Vass, 2010, p. 163).

In addition, *organizations* have the ability to 'instantiate wider norms and depend upon the norms that they instantiate', to (a certain extent) 'shape their [members'] beliefs about their responsibilities and obligations' and to 'use the commitment of members to the organisation...as a lever to influence their conformance with these norms' (p. 164).

The shift from the work's 'care' to the work's 'management', which resulted in the rupture of the work's sociality and therefore the rupture of its resistance to neoliberalism's production of the social, was manifested through a change in the relations produced in the work soon after the work's opening. Roles and hierarchies that existed but were originally not felt as such due to a collaborative

spirit and ethos became strongly structured and specialized as in an organization: the participants executed the work and Sehgal, his collaborator and assistants were to ensure this execution. Furthermore, the specialization of the roles was reinforced by the time spent together. Where it seemed (to me) that the work's antidote to neoliberalism was spending time together as individuals who were also part of a collective, spending time together became, as I and several other participants I spoke to felt, merely individuals occupying the same space at the same time.

Most importantly, however, what ceased was the attention to the work by interrogating its concerns and therefore the relations it produced. Instead, engaging with the work involved only aesthetic concerns. Except for some feedback sessions requested by the participants or a meeting that was intended to ensure the quality of our conversations with visitors, the work and the relationship of the individual to the collective ceased to be interrogated, replaced by a governing of the 'conduct of conduct' (Foucault, 2008 [1978-79]). In conversations I had with participants, it became clear that several of them felt isolated, feeling as though they were working in a machine where their opinions were not of value any longer.³⁵

³⁵ Some connections can be observed between *These Associations* and dancer/choreographer Sara Wookey's experience of auditioning for Marina Abramović's *Nude with Skeleton* (2002) for the annual gala of MOCA (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles). In 'Open Letter to Artists', Wookey (2011) describes her experience of auditioning for the work, the expectations of her as a performer, and why she decided to turn down the offer to perform in the work. Performers in this work were asked to 'lie naked and speechless on a slowly rotating table, starting from before guests arrived and lasting until after they left' (ibid.). Wookey found several elements problematic with the demands made on her as a performer. First she was not to get paid for rehearsals, but only for performances (a very low fee of \$150, when guests paid \$100,000 each to just seat at the table). Secondly, no measures of any kind were taken to protect the performers from verbal or physical harassment by the spectators. Instead, performers were expected to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement, which made each of them liable for more than \$1

The commitment to the work of most participants continued, but for many it seemed more of a commitment to being committed to the work – acting professionally. Having also observed the work as a visitor during that time, except for the physical exhaustion, I observed a loss of morale and a resulting lack of energy to treat, for example, the personal stories the participants shared with the visitors as what Sehgal called ‘a gift to the visitor’ (Sehgal, 17 July 2012). Physical and emotional exhaustion in this kind of work is expected, of course, as is an overall change in dynamics when a work is presented for a lengthy period of time. But, in this case, for me, it was the rupture in sociality – the shift in how the relationships in the work and how the work itself was ‘cared for’ – that had the most dramatic effect on the work’s potential.

Although I am not arguing that this shift was intentional, nor that Sehgal ceased to care about the work, I suggest that, in some ways, what happened mirrored the

million should they decided to discuss what occurred in the audition. Wookey, rightly so, found these conditions ‘extremely problematic, exploitative and potentially abusive’ and turned down the offer to perform. As she argues, it is highly important that, first, performers are treated fairly and ethically. Second, that artists themselves have a responsibility: that the kind of work and the conditions in which they accept to do it, sets precedent for all performers’ performing experiences that follow. She urges performers to unionize, demand fair treatment and pay and condemns the ‘current social, cultural, and economic conditions that have rendered the exploitation of cultural workers commonplace, natural, and even horrifically banal’ (ibid.). In my opinion, auditioning, rehearsing and performing in Sehgal’s work did not feel exploitative in the way Wookey describes her experience of auditioning for Abramović. We were paid for rehearsals and performances – albeit at the London minimum wage – precautions were taken for possible harassment by museum visitors – although this was still the most vulnerable moment for the performer in the work – and physical therapists became available as injuries from working on Turbine’s Hall cement floor accumulated – although this problem should have been foreseen. In rehearsals for and initial performances of the work, relations amongst participants and the work itself were ‘cared’ for. However, I argue that this attention and care for these relations and for the work’s concerns ceased and, as I suggest in due course in some respects echoing Wookey’s cautioning of performers regarding the precedent their choices set, our - Sehgal’s and the participants’ - lack of questioning how these relations were being produced and cared for reproduced neoliberal ethics and rationalities.

'increasing call for "personal responsibility" and "self-care"' that follows the reduction of state services (Lemke cited in Barnett, 2010, p. 282): in the absence of the social net that was initially created, the participants in *These Associations* were left to be responsible for themselves and their well-being. We began to function as atomized individuals and the work felt as an arena (much like the neoliberal market) where individuals operated freely, but where conduct was monitored and problems became the responsibility of the individual. Even if the removal of the social net was intended to empower us by making us responsible for the work, what we were actually responsible for was our well-being and participation, while important decisions regarding the artwork and the collective were made by management. As the working shifts did not always allow for interaction among the participants, it was made even harder for some to continue being part of the work. And although some treated their participation as a 9 a.m.–5 p.m. job, many struggled psychologically to continue.

I acknowledge that there are other readings of the work. However, from my reading of and experience in it, I believe that, although this reproduction of neoliberal governmentality and rationalities was not intended, the lack of time and attention given to the work's concerns and the relations it produced ruptured its ethos and sociality and therefore its resistance to neoliberalism's production of the social. Part of this change stemmed from the emotional and physical fatigue that had influenced everyone in the project. However, part of the change also stemmed from the demands of artistic overproduction that *These Associations* was supposed to resist. Sehgal found himself in the position where he had to attend to the making and presentation of two works in two different countries (*This Variation* was being presented in *Documenta XIII*) as well as needing to spend time with his family. In

both countries, institutions required the presentation of his work seven days a week (Sehgal, 25 October 2012). His collaborator ensured its presentation in his absence, but not the function of the collective or the interrogation of the work's concerns.

If the work's concern with the reconfiguration of the individual to the collective was to be enacted through the collective it created, a different kind of time and attention needed to be given to the work throughout its presentation. In order for the work to maintain its ethical centre it needed to maintain the manner in which it was 'cared for', not simply be 'managed'. This could have been realized by a decision to reduce artistic production in order for the artist to spend time with the work and by extending the circle of 'power': by delegating responsibility outside of the small management circle and organizing meetings that nurtured the relationships in the work and allowed for conversations that continued to interrogate the work and its concerns theoretically and practically. But how easily can an artist reject offers for the presentation of his work when they come from institutions that are appropriate for its presentation? And although many of the participants, because of our interest in the work's concerns, would have been happy to continue these conversations despite the unpaid extra hours, others were not willing or able to provide free labour.

The position in which Sehgal found himself may well be compared to Jeremy Gilbert's thoughts on Mark Fisher's *Capitalist Realism* (2009).

[O]ne of the most intriguing elements of Fisher's account of 'capitalist realism' is his emphasis on its ideological efficacy even in the face of explicit rejection by the very subjects whose behaviour it organises....We know that we don't like neoliberalism, didn't vote for it, and object in principle to its exigencies: but we recognise also that unless we comply

with it, primarily in our workplaces and in our labour-market behaviour, then we will be punished (primarily by being denied the main consolation for participation in neoliberal culture: access to a wide range of consumer goods), and will be unlikely to find ourselves inhabiting a radically different social terrain (2013, p. 13).

Does this make the shift in the work's 'care' unavoidable? Bishop argues that for both Guattari and Rancière 'art and the social are not to be reconciled, but sustained in continual tension' (2012b, p. 278). Perhaps, as she notes, part of the problem is that the work attempted to 'bear the burden of devising new models of social and political organization – a task that [artists] are not always equipped to undertake' (p. 284). Having been part of such a work, I have to agree with Bishop, but for different reasons. Perhaps the work was not appropriately 'equipped', but only with respect to tools for following through with its ideas: time and attention. The work seemed to have suffered from the same problems as many social movements: it ran out of time, energy, attention and money. Within neoliberalism, precarity and the lack of time and attention are what most of us struggle against. *These Associations* was a manifestation of this. But this does not make the work less valuable. It instead makes it more important for this kind of work to be made, but with an awareness of its needs so that it is properly cared for (and funded³⁶) in order to interrogate its concerns and resist neoliberal ethics.

Claire Bishop proposes that participatory work should not be judged according to simplistic ethical criteria because many artists – Santiago Sierra, for example – 'reify *precisely in order to discuss reification*, or...exploit *precisely to thematise exploitation itself*' (2012b, p. 239). Yet this is still an ethical judgment, arguing that although Sierra uses unconventional strategies, he does so in order to question our

³⁶ Although a conversation about the work's funding is relevant to this conversation (the work was funded by *Unilever Series*), the focus of this chapter is on the relationships produced within the work. An extensive conversation about private versus state funding could illuminate aspects of the work but it could only function at a hypothetical level.

ethics and make a social critique. *These Associations* did not intentionally shift to an *organization* with neoliberal characteristics to expose the unavoidability of this shift or our predicament in neoliberal capitalism – the shift was not an artistic decision but an outcome of how the work was ‘cared’ for. It is therefore important to look at each work and identify the relations it produces in it and outside of it and nuance how and why it produces these relations and to what effect. As I argued in the introduction, this is not a matter of ‘collapsing’ art, politics and ethics, because they are always in a dialogical relationship. My point here is that it is important that their relationship is considered and examined. Our encounter with ‘an other’, whether that ‘other’ is a person or an artwork, is, in the end, always social and ethical.

Conclusions

On Promises and Trust

Hannah Arendt, whose philosophy is sung in the work, believes that power ‘can spring up as if from nowhere when people begin to “act in concert”, and can ebb away unexpectedly from apparently powerful regimes’. She nevertheless warns that, although action is hopeful, it can at the same time result in negative effects over which we have no control due to the unpredictability and complexity of interaction between the initiatives of different individuals (1998, pp. xvii–xviii). Arendt suggests that remedies for this unpredictability include the possibility and ability for ‘further action’ that can intervene in the current state of politics by interrupting current processes (or by changing their direction) and ‘the human capacity to make and keep promises’ (Canovan in Arendt, 1998, pp. xviii–xix).

Equally important to the work's rupture of sociality and therefore resistance to neoliberalism's production of the social was the rupture of promises and therefore of trust. The work's biggest potential and its strongest tactic of resistance to neoliberal rationality evaporated, for the work ceased to perform its own philosophy in the relationships it produced within the work, between the maker, his collaborators and the participants. If in *These Associations* each of us (the participants, Sehgal and his collaborator) raised questions of ourselves, the group and the work, and in doing so challenged how we reproduced structures and philosophies of thought and action through our relationships and interactions within the work, perhaps something more would have been produced despite the lack of time and money. And yet perhaps, since the restrictions of the work's consumption by an audience have been lifted, the collective created can reconstitute itself under different terms, engage in 'further action', make new promises and keep them.

On Cooperation & Solidarity

It is with the questions that we did not raise of ourselves, the group and the work that I would like to finish this chapter. Sennett is important to this discussion, not only because of Sehgal's philosophical affinities with him,³⁷ but because in many ways the work became a materialisation of what I perceive as their common understandings about the relationship of the individual to the collective. This is where I believe, along with the difficulty of producing artwork under neoliberalism, the problematic functioning of the work lies and why its potential to

³⁷ Sehgal (2012) referred to Sennett's thinking during workshops and rehearsals. They were to join in conversation at an event at the Goethe-Institut London, but due to illness Sennett was not able to attend (Sehgal and Sennett 2012).

resist neoliberalism evaporated.

Like Sehgal, Sennett is also concerned with our social interactions – the type and time of interactions we are afforded. He suggests that ‘we need to develop the kinds of intermediary institutions that give people a sustained sense of living together in time’. For him, rethinking unions as a way to establish long-term relationships with ‘ethnically and skills diverse’ strangers is a solution (2012). This is what, in a way, Sehgal produced: a community of strangers with different skills who spent time together. However, Sennett suggests a very specific mode of sociality, one based on the ‘cooperation’ of individuals. He explains that although we are genetically programmed to cooperate in order to survive, he considers cooperation also a skill that needs to be developed, but one of which we have been robbed/deskilled from by neoliberal capitalism. Cooperation, Sennett holds, requires even more skill to be practised when it is complex: when the other whom we are engaging with is someone that is different from ourselves, or someone that we do not understand or like. He considers part of the problem the misconception that cooperation and autonomy as well as cooperation and competition are opposites. He looks at the nature of the social skills that might enable us to become competent at dealing with these seemingly contradictory pairs by looking at them as ‘complexities which need to be managed’. To achieve this he looks at ‘three polarities in the development of skill’: the first one between dialogics and dialectics, the second between declarative and subjunctive forms of communication and the third between empathy and sympathy in terms of our conception of the other (Sennett, 2012).

Sennett argues that complex cooperation does not require dialectic skills (the Hegelian ‘movement from thesis to antithesis to synthesis’, where parties find a way of expressing their views to each other eventually coming to an understanding, a resolution, a moment of catharsis). Rather complex cooperation requires dialogic skills, where dialogic (a term developed by Mikhail Bakhtin in the 1930s to indicate ‘non-resolved interactions’³⁸ refers to ‘a process, which does not necessarily have to terminate in a common agreement or a common action’. Bakhtin observes that ‘the action of responding to another person can become itself the *end* of relating to them’ (2012).

The second skill Sennett believes is required in complex cooperation is the subjunctive mode of expression – i.e. *I would have thought* – versus the declarative – i.e. *I think...I believe*. Sennett states that declaratory speech embodies ‘what the philosopher Bernard Williams calls a fetish of assertion...a way of extinguishing the other through conflict...Whereas the subjunctive mode is something that opens up the space for cooperation by creating ambiguity... [I]t removes [the] *foreclosure* of interaction involved in declarative speech’ (2012).

Lastly, his third aspect of complex cooperation, how one understands/relates/conceives addresses the other, is manifested through a distinction between sympathy and empathy. Sennett, after Adam Smith, understands sympathy as preceding identification with another’s pain or interest, which he considers a ‘moralistic way of understanding the address to the other’. On the contrary, empathy implies recognition of the importance of the other’s

³⁸ Although ‘dialogic’ is also the adjective derived from ‘dialogue’ which pre-exists Bakhtin’s use of it, Sennett here explicitly uses the Bakhtinian definition of the term.

situation and it is based on curiosity and a certain distancing resulting from the inability to put oneself in the other's position. Characterising the difference between empathy and sympathy as the difference between hot (for sympathy) and cold (for empathy), Sennett argues that complex cooperation requires the cooler kind: 'the address of the other that's mobilised by empathy' (2012).

Sennett, like Sehgal, has in my opinion correctly identified the consequences of neoliberalism as well as one of the antidotes: spending time together. It is the *how* this time is spent where I disagree with them and therefore why I think the potential of the work evaporated. What is needed today is *solidarity* – we have cooperated enough; and solidarity cannot emerge without being both empathetic and sympathetic, without the realisation that there are common hot topics that we do need to talk about. Sennett considers 'cooperation more complex than solidarity' and believes that when we cooperate 'we do not talk with people about the things we know are going to be explosive' (2012). But sentiment is not necessarily a bad thing; it is what brings us together before the work on ideas – which requires both the subjunctive and declaratory mode – has to happen. The subjunctive mode might be necessary to avoid physical violence, but everyday we are experiencing different more or less subtle types of violence that we need to say no to in a very declaratory manner: to the acceleration of time, to free labour, to precarious work, to the annihilation of countries for the benefit of another world order, to the violation of human rights. Sehgal's gesturing towards a reconfiguration of the relationship between the individual and the collective and his bringing together people that perhaps would not normally associate and enabling them to spend time together working is to be complimented. But it is the suggested *how* of this spending time together and the discouragement of

questioning ourselves and how we reproduce structures and philosophies of thought and action that robbed the work of what I think was its actual potential. The rupture of the sociality of the work and of its promises and trust resulted also in a rupture of solidarity.

αλληλεγγύη [alilengíi]

In Greek solidarity is defined as follows:

αλληλεγγύη [alilengíi] (noun) < αλλήλων (others) + εγγύτητα (distance / proximity); solidarity

- *The distance/ relationship between people.*
- *The ethical imperative/ obligation of members of a group to reciprocally support one another [Solidarity < French solidaire; interdependent (old French in common) < Latin solidus; solid, whole].*

‘Αλληλεγγύη’ therefore requires the awareness of this distance (much like the *equidistant walking* we performed) and relationship and the identification of common interests, needs and desires and what in each moment means to show/be in solidarity with the ‘other’: how to support the colleague/performer/artwork/human/country, which can take the form of, for example, witnessing, considering, questioning, challenging, disapproving, intervening, contributing, protesting with/against, supporting a movement. In addition, although ‘solidarity’ in English implies unity/ unanimity, with the Greek, ‘αλληλεγγύη’ the emphasis is on the support of others as a right and responsibility and the protection of common rights and responsibilities, without the erasure of individuality and the assumption of unity, harmony or cohesion.

Franco Bifo Berardi suggests that ‘today’s social/political problem’ due to the ‘compulsive acceleration of daily rhythms’ is spasm, which ‘stems from economics of competition’ (2013). He defines spasm as a kind of physio-social condition where ‘[t]he body is less able to live and breathe in harmony with other bodies’,

because of the 'precarisation (continuous competition between bodies) of work and daily life' (ibid.). Unlike Sennett, Berardi identifies the result of modernity's acceleration of time as not the weakening of cooperation, but the breaking of solidarity. Opposing Sennett's view on solidarity as unnecessary for cooperation, Berardi states that '[s]olidarity is not a political or moral word. It is about empathy' and 'pleasure of others' bodies which today are victims of competition...[R]eal change cannot be political, because it has to do with the body of the other, with solidarity', new forms of which are needed in daily life (ibid.). He believes that today's social movement needs to 'become a healer: a common breath/body/activity of healing' (ibid.).

I suggest that our social body is not just suffering from spasms, but from Tourette's syndrome. As described by Agamben, Tourette's is a 'nervous condition characterised by lack of motor coordination' of a 'proliferation of tics, spasmodic jerks, and mannerisms – a proliferation that cannot be defined in any way other than as a generalised catastrophe of the sphere of gestures' where people 'can neither start nor complete the simplest gestures' (2000, p. 50). As time is accelerated and the political and economic landscape is shifting so quickly and so drastically, we find ourselves with no time to meet, think, organise and act in order to prevent its worsening, but only respond with spasmodic, incomplete gestures. It is perhaps why declaratory speech, as well as conversations on hot topics in gatherings with strangers or friends are crucial. If in Sehgal's work each one of us raised these questions of ourselves, of the group and the maker and challenged what it is that we are doing, how we relate, if we discussed what Sennett calls hot tub issues, perhaps something more would have been produced. It is this questioning of the work and the relations it produced that, if sustained, had the

potential to effect change by producing knowledge – what Elder-Vass would call ‘emerging properties’ – that affected our practices of being in the work that could influence such practices outside of the work. *Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?* (‘Inter-Vention’ 2), which follows this chapter, was created to address such issues arising from *These Associations*: the importance of sociality, of trust and promises and of the questioning through the artwork of its function and its relation to the current economy.

'INTER-VENTION' 2

Talking with Strangers: What is Violence? (2012)

'Potentials of Performance', *Performance Matters*, The White Building, London

1. *The Economies of 'Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?'*

a) *'Potentials of Performance'*

Talking with Strangers: What is Violence? was created for the final year of *Performance Matters*, a three-year AHRC funded creative research project and collaboration between University of Roehampton, London, Goldsmiths, University of London and the Live Art Development Agency (LADA). The project took place between 2009 and 2012 and was directed by Professor Adrian Heathfield (Roehampton), Dr. Gavin Butt (Goldsmiths) and Lois Keidan (LADA). *Performance Matters* was, as articulated by its directors,

a creative research project exploring the contemporary values associated with performance at a time when it has increased resonance as a cultural phenomenon, and as a concept and metaphor in critical discourse. Profound shifts in the cultural status and presence of performance have recently been manifested through a number of related phenomena including the museological, archival and curatorial assimilation of Live Art; an increased profile of performance aesthetics within visual arts, theatre and contemporary dance practice; a 'performative turn' in critical theory and cultural studies; and a re-evaluation of performance phenomena that have hitherto been marginalised by critical consideration. Against the backdrop of this institutional, theoretical and market embrace of performance and Live Art, *Performance Matters* ask[ed] whether such forms of cultural practice are now being taken seriously in culture more broadly, and how they may possess the potential to refashion understandings of what, and how, things matter in the contemporary world (*Performance Matters*, 2009-2012).

The *Performance Matters* project, then, was concerned with questioning what matters and how it matters in our contemporary moment and the potential of performance to affect both. Each of the three years of the project was themed and culminated in a symposium.

In its first year, working under the title *Performing Idea* (2009/10) the project investigated the shifting relations between performance practice

and discourse, event and writing, by staging critical and creative exchanges between leading international figures in the performance studies field. During the second year, under the title *Trashing Performance* (2010/11), marginal and degraded performance practices were explored in order to produce critical and cultural innovations through non-institutional manifestations and informal disseminations. The final year of the project, framed under the theme *Potentials of Performance* (2011/12)...feature[d] dialogue projects initiated by the group of associated researchers from both Goldsmiths, University of London and University of Roehampton (*Performance Matters*, 2009-2012).

The symposium of each year included 'perspectives and contributions from artists, scholars and other cultural practitioners', involving 'numerous innovative and exploratory events in London and internationally' (*Performance Matters*, 2009-2012). As one of the associate researchers of the project, I participated – along with other PhD students from Roehampton and Goldsmiths – in it through discussions and the presentation of my work at the symposia, which addressed each year's theme. The associate researchers were featured most prominently in the project's final year, 'Potentials of Performance'.

'Potentials of Performance' (2011-2012) looked 'towards possible futures' of performance, seeking 'to address timely questions of promise and transformation' (*Performance Matters*, 2011-2012). It focused on

performance's emergent and unrealised potential: what does performance hold in store in its present-day testing of the limits of the social, the cultural, the vital and the critical? What lies latent within and around performance? What is waiting to be realised, developed, and made legible?...What are its potentials to transform civic social bodies and the production of subjectivities more broadly? And how might the failed promise of democracy in contemporary Europe and beyond necessitate a rethinking of the very promise of performance? In short: what can performance do? (*Performance Matters*, 2011-2012).

During the year 2011-2012, the directors, researchers and associate researchers of the project held meetings during which we had discussions about the year's theme. We addressed questions about the realisation of a 'potential', what we might

consider the term to mean and whether and how a potential might – if we deem it important – be realised. We also shared our ideas about our potential individual dialogue projects giving feedback to each other.

B) *The Socioeconomic Crisis and Tino Sehgal's 'These Associations'*

During the time I was considering my response to the call of the symposium, two things were already occurring: first, Greece, where I was born and raised, was undergoing dramatic changes due to the austerity measures imposed by Troika and the IMF. Knowing the socioeconomic problems, including the re-emergence of fascism, the country was facing made it difficult to be away from it, and I was questioning why one might continue to create work in the same manner one did before, when the world, not only Greece, was changing in the manner it had been. The events had a big impact on my thinking about art's role in society in the contemporary moment. Their effect was manifested in my desire to, for the first time, create an explicitly political work. The *Performance Matters* year's theme afforded the opportunity for this since it itself commented on the state of democracy in Europe, questioning what performance can do in the contemporary moment.

Second, during the year 2011-2012, I was involved in workshops, rehearsals and presentations of Tino Sehgal's work *These Associations*. As argued in the previous chapter, despite its initial promise, the work ceased to be resistant to neoliberal ethics and rationalities (which I considered also to be at the root of the socioeconomic crisis in Europe and the US), because it ceased to perform its own philosophy in the collective it created. The work, by rupturing the sociality upon which it was originally founded, ruptured its resistance to neoliberalism's

production of the social, creating a series of other ruptures: a rupture of promises and therefore of trust, and, as a result, a rupture of solidarity. I suggested that the initial rupture, that of the work's sociality and the consequent evaporation of the work's potential to effect change outside of the artwork's framework, was a result of a lack of questioning of the work, the relations it produced and of our role in it, and of a lack of engagement with and discussion of what Richard Sennett has referred to as 'hot tub' issues (Sennett, 2012).

All these issues – the socioeconomic crisis, the re-emergence of fascism, the failure of democracy and the importance of sociality, trust and keeping promises – along with my belief that systems can reveal the assumptions upon which they are built (Kershaw, 2007) and the discussions around the potential of performance today ensuing from the sociality of the *Performance Matters* meetings, created the basis from which I asked questions in creating *Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?*, and proposed answers through the making of the work itself. In creating this work, considering the economy of 'Potentials of Performance', the larger economy and the economy of relations that Sehgal's *These Associations* produced, I set the aforementioned problems and concerns as parameters in the construction of the work itself, and asked the following questions:

- What is the potential of performance in the contemporary moment?
- What can performance do in the face of the current socioeconomic crisis and the failure of democracy and how?
- What kind of questions can performance ask that may afford conversations important to the contemporary moment?
- How can the work 'express' (press out / press the thinking on) these issues?
- Considering that a work is what it *does*, how can the work be constructed so that the concerns with notions of trust, promises and systems and the

relations that the work produces through its sociality are built into the project and are performed?

The conversation with the other researchers of the project in the context of the socioeconomic crisis and my experience of working in Sehgal's work brought to my attention how a lot of artwork today seemed, to me, to lack relevance; not because it was not explicitly political, but because a lot of it was made as if in a vacuum, with no consideration of the several contexts in which it was embedded. I found this kind of work, as well as conversations with colleagues I often found myself in that had no relevance to anything outside of the world of performance, what I referred to as 'autistic' in that they revolved continuously around themselves.

The Proposition

My proposition, then, in regards to the potential of performance and what performance can do in the contemporary moment, was to displace ourselves and allow for intruders: to place our dialogues in different contexts and allow voices from different disciplines and countries to intrude into our context. I located potential, then, in the displacement and at the same time expansion of our dialogues about issues that perhaps concern us all from our usual social and working networks to people outside our discipline and/or country. (This proposition was also provided as part of the rationale for this project on the *Performance Matters* website. See *Appendix 2* for the 'Project Introduction' and the three 'Blogs' that accompanied the project and were posted on the website). This call for what I termed 'radical displacement' of our dialogues and for a 'viral intrusion' of people outside our discipline and/or country was instrumental in the construction of the work and the sociality it created. I decided that the work would

be about a conversation amongst people beyond the borders of our countries and/or disciplines, who I called 'strangers'.

Equally important was the subject of the conversation and how the conversation was initiated. During my consideration of its subject, I encountered Žižek's video talk in *Big Think* entitled 'Don't Act. Just Think' (2012). In it, Žižek argued that what is important in this moment, a moment when we are in need of a system to replace capitalism is to think, not act; at least, not yet.

My advice would be – because I don't have simple answers – ...precisely to start thinking. Don't get caught into this pseudo-activist pressure. Do something. Let's do it, and so on. So, no, the time is to think. I even provoked some of the leftist friends when I told them that if the famous Marxist formula was, 'Philosophers have only interpreted the world; the time is to change it'...that maybe today we should say, 'In the twentieth century, we maybe tried to change the world too quickly. The time is to interpret it again, to start thinking... So the beauty is to select a topic which touches the fundamentals of our ideology, but at the same time, we cannot be accused of promoting an impossible agenda – like abolish all private property or what. No, it's something that can be done and is done relatively successfully and so on. So that would be my idea, to carefully select issues like this where we do stir up public debate but we cannot be accused of being utopians in the bad sense of the term (Žižek, 2012).

The work's thematisation of violence and its framing as a question ('What is violence?') was performing for me the kind of gesture that I understand Žižek to be describing: urging an act of pausing, thinking about and discussing an issue that addresses at a fundamental level our relationship to the world and to others. The choice of this question was a result of an urgent need to address the economic (via austerity measures) and, as a consequence, social and physical³⁹ violence inflicted in Europe (and not only Europe – the Arab Spring, for example, was still in full swing at the time) and my concern with being part of quite a few conversations that felt disembodied from what was happening. Violence felt like something that

³⁹ Here I am referring to the violence of Golden Dawn against immigrants.

needed to be ended, but at the same time something that was called for. It had become for me a visceral need to be violent, in the sense of being disruptive, rethinking assumptions, or as Žižek suggests, disturbing the way things are usually going or resisting in some way inflictions that aimed at affording things to continue as they are (2011). It seemed important to discuss violence and performance, because, as I argued in one of the Blogs on the *Performance Matters* website, the performance studies discourse, a discourse of disruption, needs to maintain its connectedness to the disruption/violence outside of it and reconsider its embeddedness in the several economies of which it is part.

Although in making this work my interest was in economic violence, I wanted the participants of the project – the ‘strangers’ with whom the conversation was to take place – to approach violence from the perspective that was important to them. Therefore, the subject of discussion was posed as a question (‘What is violence?’) that was open to different interpretations. The conversation about violence in relation to people or to systems of which we are part, no matter from which perspective one might approach it, was, for me, immediately connected to issues of ‘trust’. ‘Trust’ was addressed both through my second Blog – ‘to whom, to what, why and how do we place our trust? When is it necessary to break our trust with persons and/or systems? When is violence necessary?’ (see *Appendix 2*) – but also in the relations that the work produced: in my relationships with the ‘strangers’ as I will elaborate in due time.

Systems, trust and the keeping of promises, violence, the radical displacement of our dialogues, the viral intrusion of ‘strangers’ in them and the necessary mode of sociality were therefore the key considerations in constructing this work with

which I wanted to construct an economy of relations that afforded the participants and the spectators opportunity to question the work, and the work to question the economies in which it was embedded.

2. The Work

For this project, I invited 'strangers' – participants from different countries and/or disciplines – to respond in the medium of text, image or video to the question 'What is violence?' that I sent to them via email. Email became the necessary mode of communication due to the project's aspiration to move outside its time zone and country borders. The work that resulted from this conversation was an installation consisting of the objects that participants offered in response to the question and a live dialogue about the project, its questions and potentialities with participants and spectators following the exhibition. *Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?* interrogated both the construction of systems and the economy of relations produced within the work, as well as its relation to systems and economies outside of it: those in which the work was embedded.

This is how the work functioned

On 27 June 2012, I started four email chains. For each chain I sent the question 'What is violence?' via email to either an artist outside the UK or to a person outside the performance field inside or outside the UK. That person then needed to do the same (send the question via email to either a person within their field but outside their country or to a person outside their field). Each participant needed to respond to me with his or her object (a text, drawing, photo, video, sound, or another object agreed upon) within a week, and also email the original question to another person, always copying me in the emails. Each

email chain ended either when it died – when people stopped contributing responses – or by when the deadline of the project (mid-October 2012) arrived. If a chain died before three or more people contributed responses, I kept the responses I received and initiated a new chain.

These Were the Promises Made

This was the set of rules / the terms of engagement to be agreed upon by all parties involved and to trust that they would be followed (included also in ‘Blog 1’. See *Appendix 2*):

- The rules are the work. It is therefore important that they are adhered to. If a rule is broken (i.e. if there is no reply within the one-week time frame), I maintain the right to re-authorise the terms of engagement: I will communicate with the participants to adapt, restart or end a chain.
- Since I cannot foresee all the possible ways in which the rules might be broken, decisions will be made as problems occur. If there is a need for me to break/amend a rule I will make this and the reasons for it explicitly known.
- Unless requested by the participant, their name will accompany his or her object contribution.
- Under no circumstances am I to break the anonymity of those participants that have requested it.
- I will present the participants’ objects to the best of my ability considering time, spatial and economic restrictions. For example, if many participants email me photos, I might need to print them in a lower quality photo paper, or if an object sent by post is prohibitively large for the presentation space, it might not be possible to exhibit it. Lastly, if the number of responses exceeds my expectations, I may need to select fewer responses to present at the exhibition, or discuss with the participant an alternative medium of presentation.
- The responses will be gathered and choreographed into an installation exhibited at *Performance Matters*’ ‘Potentials of Performance’.

- Following the exhibition of the installation a few of the participants will engage in a discussion about the project, its implications and its function with the spectators.
- If I am able to continue presenting this work beyond the *Performance Matters* Symposium, I will request the consent of participants for the inclusion of their responses in the continuation and/or transformation of this project.

‘We – you, the participants, the audience and I – have now entered a contract. There is no small print. If there is, let me know and I will make it big. If there are amendments, I will let you know. Without you this contract is invalid’ (excerpt from ‘Blog 1’, see *Appendix 2*).

These were the Assumptions and Exclusions of the System Constructed

The project was as much about the rules of the system constructed as about the assumptions, inclusions and exclusions that it was unavoidably built on. For example, I made the assumption that, were I – or another participant – to send an email to a complete stranger, there would most likely be no response or possibly a response that did not follow the rules. For this reason, the first person of every chain that I sent the question to was someone that I trusted to bring the email chain to life. He or she still had to be either an artist outside my country of residence (UK) or a person outside the performance field. An important and problematic exclusion in the project was that participants needed to be users of the English language. Although some of the texts offered as objects were in a different language, the participants also provided an English translation.

The Work's Presentation

In the middle of October 2012 I had to 'violently' end all email chains through which I had been receiving the object-responses in order to constitute the installation. A different process begun: that of bringing these objects into a common physical space and making decisions on how to make them and the conversation about violence legible. The installation included the exhibition of the participants' objects, the three Blogs posted on the *Performance Matters* website, all the email exchanges with the participants, the email chains that died, a fact sheet with the number of people to whom I sent the email invitation to participate and the names of the participants in their individual email chains, accompanied by their vocation and location (please see *Appendix 2*). All of the participants' objects were exhibited – there were no exclusions out of personal preference or practical necessity.

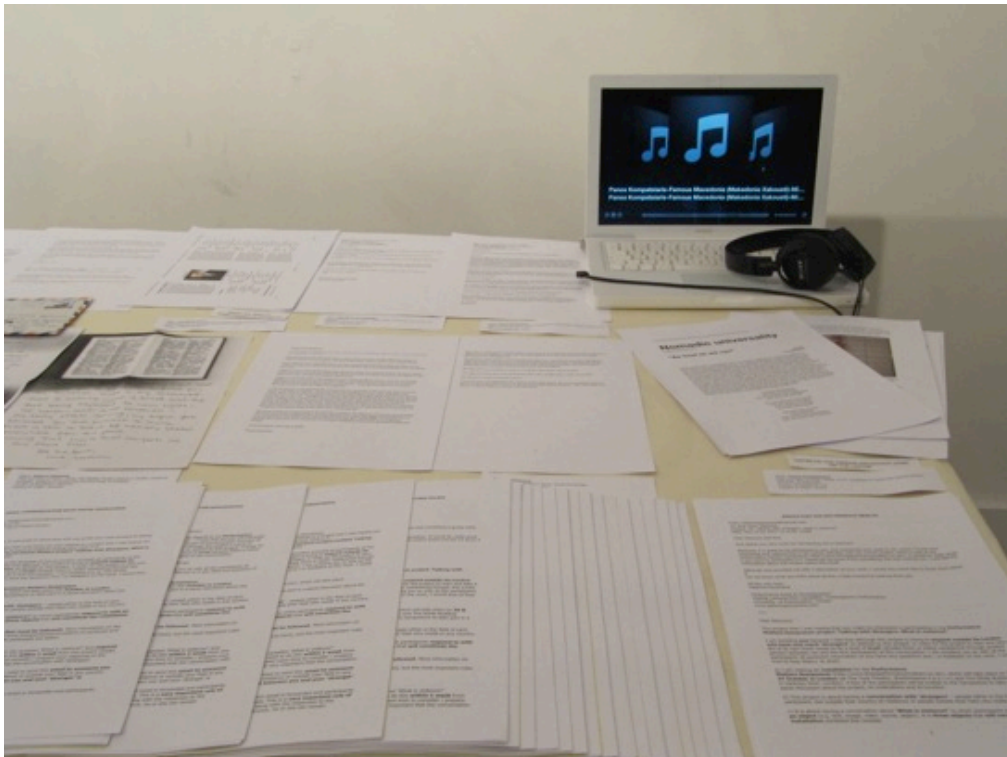


Photo from the presentation of *Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?* at Galeria Boavista, Lisbon Portugal, December 2012. Photo by Katerina Paramana. At bottom centre: the email exchanges of the participants included also in the installation.

The responses to the question ‘What is Violence?’ ranged from texts, videos, sound, photos and drawings that understood violence in different ways: violence as control, domestic violence, violence as fear and despair, the everyday violence of struggling to perform multiple roles, violence as that which cannot be articulated, represented or theorised, violence as trauma, as capitalism or gentrification, political systems as violence, institutional violence, censorship and nationalism as violence, punk and protest as violence that is desired, emigration as violence, the violence of history and violence as a question of ethics. For example, as seen from the first photograph below, Ypatia Vourloumis’s object-response was a photo of the protests in Greece in 2011 and a piece of marble broken off a building in Syntagma Square and thrown at the police. Marios Chatziprokopiou’s object-response diagonally to the right of Ypatia’s includes the translation of a letter to him from the Greek army. His contribution was concerned with institutional violence. In the middle of the third photograph below, one can discern Ana Vujanović’s object-response: a photograph and an accompanying text. The photograph is the (photocopy of a) 1945 drawing by her grandmother a few days before liberation, of ‘her last view of freedom’ in Ravensbrück, where the German army had sent her. The photo to the left of Ana’s, by Anastasiya Zavyalova, deals with domestic violence, while the one to the right with the accompanying text is by Anna Tschli and is concerned with the everyday violence of struggling to perform multiple roles (see *Appendix 2* for the object each of the participants contributed).

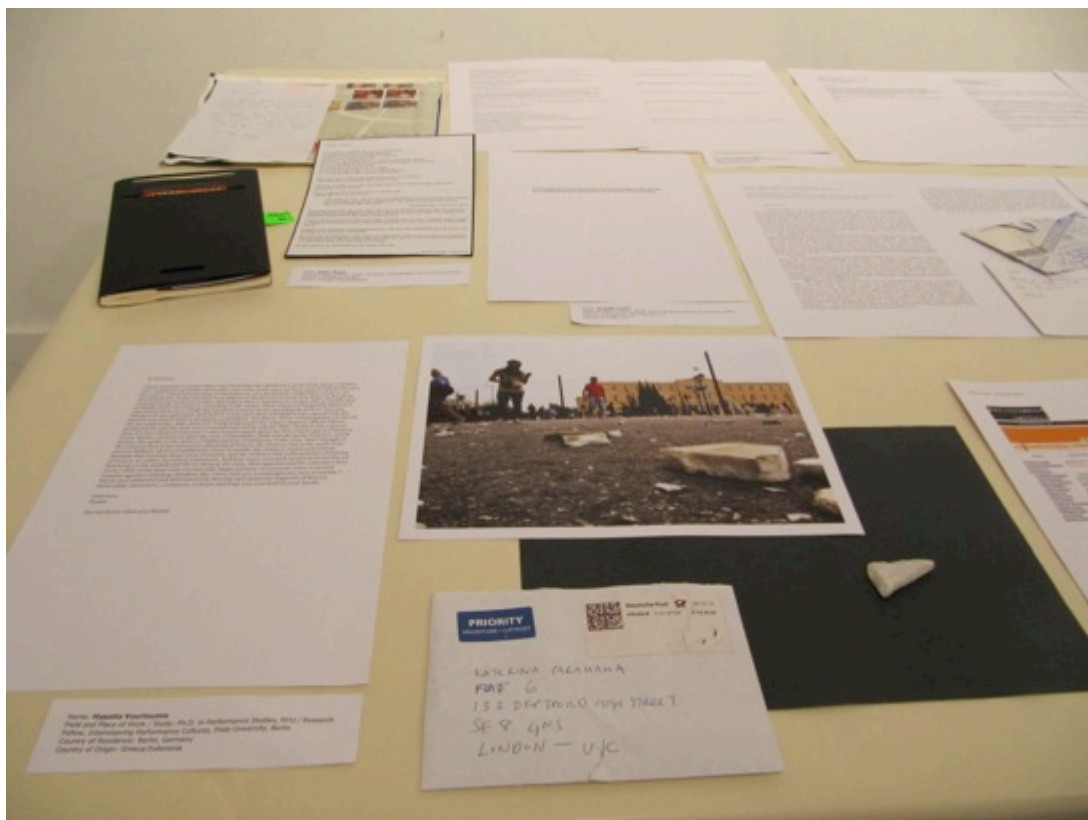


Photo from the presentation of *Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?* at Galeria Boavista, Lisbon Portugal, December 2012. Photo by Katerina Paramana.



Photo from *Performance Matters* installation presentation, White Building, London. Photo by Katerina Paramana.

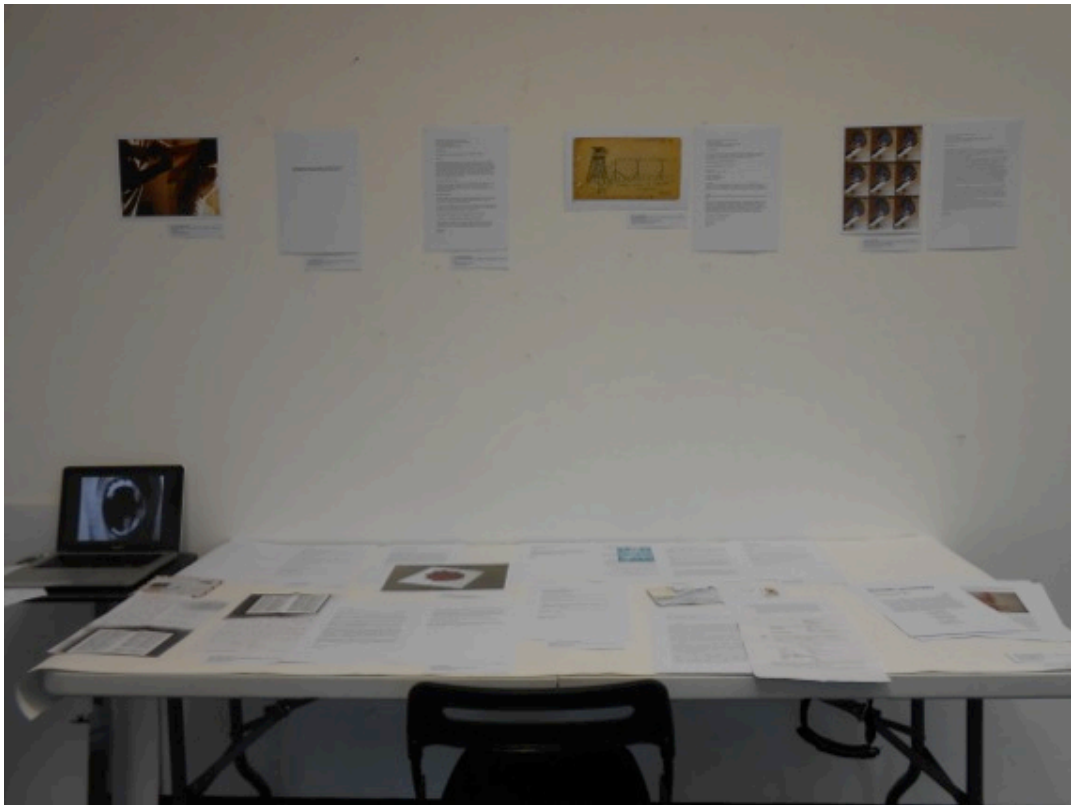


Photo from *Performance Matters* installation presentation, White Building, London.
Photo by Katerina Paramana.



Photo from the presentation of *Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?* at Galeria Boavista, Lisbon Portugal, December 2012. Photo by Katerina Paramana.



Photo from *Performance Matters* installation presentation, White Building, London.
Photo by Christa Holka.

The exhibition of the object-responses attempted to create an environment where lived experiences and understandings of violence were illuminated on their own terms and at the same time reembedded in a specific context – that of *Performance Matters* in London – making different kinds of legibility possible and perhaps more complex. The project sought to make legible both the mechanism of its construction, as well as the conversations around the subject of violence arising from this mechanism.

I considered ‘violence’ as an object itself, situated at the centre of a series of concentric circles. The first circle was the conversation created through the email chains, the second the dialogue created between the object-responses through my choreographing them in the installation space, and the third, the live conversation between spectators and participants. The budget for this project allowed me to invite three of the participants to London. I chose these

three participants because their object-responses touched on different types of violence, because they were interested in being part of this discussion and because they were from countries outside the UK and/or from different disciplines: Ana Bigotte Vieira, PhD Candidate in Contemporary Culture at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa and Visiting Scholar at NYU, was from Portugal. Marios Chatziprokopiou, performance artist and theorist and PhD Candidate at Aberystwyth University, was from Greece. And Flavia Zaka, MSc candidate in Social Psychology at the London School of Economics, was from Canada, but born in Albania. Ana's object response had to do with systemic/economic violence, Flavia's with the violence of the reproduction of systems on individual level, and Marios's with institutional violence.

For the embodied conversation about violence with the participants and spectators – a great majority of which were artists and academics of the performing arts – we all sat in a circle. I gave a short introduction to the project and introduced Ana, Marios and Flavia, emphasising that they would not start the conversation as experts. Rather, they would use their interests as the starting points for discussion with the spectators about ideas, questions and potentials that emerged from the project.

On the ground, in the middle of the circle, we had placed index cards with words that emerged from the project and from the object-responses themselves, as well as from the three participants' interests. The three of them used these cards as starting points/anchors for conversation. The spectators could at any point add an index card with a question/topic of discussion and/or enter the conversation. The conversation initiated did not seek to address a singular understanding of violence

in order to offer a solution, but to engage all of us in a discussion of what each of us found important. It aimed at a rethinking of our thinking about things that we automatically assume to be self-explanatory or already thought-through, or resolved, in order to then potentially think through them again and change what might not be 'working'. What is violence? What is the potential of violence? What is the potential of talking with strangers about violence? What is potential? What is the potential of performance? The spectators could also contribute an object-response to the installation and a few of them did.

The exhibition of the installation and the conversation with spectators took place on two consecutive days, each time with different spectators. The first day, the conversation started as described. After some wandering to different understandings of violence and commenting on the invited participants' contributions, the conversation focused on 'movement': how performance situates itself in different economies, how the movement of the conversation with 'strangers' through the object-responses moved to this embodied conversation, to a consideration of violence as fear of movement and at the same time violence propelling one to movement. The necessity of movement was also questioned. Flavia brought to the conversation André Lepecki's *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* (2006) and I mentioned Slavoj Žižek's 'Don't act. Just Think' (2012). It also extended to the construction of space in relation to violence: to buildings as both creating and preventing movement.

On the second day, I thought it constructive that we treat the relationship of violence to movement that was initiated in the conversation of the previous day as an object itself from which to start this conversation – the fourth concentric circle.

I also brought to the table Žižek and Lepecki's questioning our need to move or the priority of movement. Spectators commented on violence as the prevention of agency, violence as celebration and as a communicative act, but also as the robbing of activity and as indifference. The conversation, probably because quite a few of the spectators (as well as two of the invited participants) were from Southern European countries, quickly moved to a conversation about the violence inflicted in Greece in the form of the austerity measures, as well as by Golden Dawn against immigrants and anti-fascists. I will return to this turn of the conversation shortly, in order to discuss an objection to the conversation raised by a spectator.

3. On Objections

In making this work, I asked several questions that considered the theme of the symposium, the larger economy and my experience of participating in the economy of relations that Sehgal's *These Associations* constructed: questions regarding the potential of performance and the questions that might be important that it asks in the contemporary moment; how it can press on important issues; what it can 'do' in this moment; and how a work can be constructed so that concerns with notions of trust, promises and systems and the relations that the work produces through its sociality are built into the project and are performed.

I addressed these questions through the work's construction. Locating the potential of performance in displacing our dialogues and allowing for people from other disciplines and countries to intrude in them, I invited 'strangers' to participate in it. Considering what topics might be important to discuss in our contemporary moment, the work enticed a conversation on violence. Believing that systems can reveal the assumptions upon which they are built, I constructed

the work as a system that revealed the rules and process of its construction through, for example, the articulation of these rules in the email-invitation and in the Blogs, and the inclusion of these Blogs and the email exchanges with the participants as objects in the installation.

Furthermore, concerned with the importance of a sociality created with 'strangers' that is based on trust and the keeping of promises, the work addressed them through the relationships it produced. Its budget did not allow for monetary compensation, so the project itself was only possible because the participants participated solely because they were interested in the work and thought that it was important to express their opinion – because on some level they 'trusted' it. In addition, having created a work where the participants and I were never in the same space at the same time until the work's presentation,⁴⁰ trust between the participants and myself was 'worked at' (Giddens, 2009, p. 121): it was initiated through the careful, specific and personal emails exchanged with each of them expressing what I considered the importance of the work to be and my investment in it; it was developed and maintained over time, despite the disembodiedness of our interactions, in the relationship built between participants themselves – to respond to the email request and on time – and with me through the communication with them during the work's making and discussions about amendments that needed to be made; and it was maintained after the work's completion through emails and Skype conversations where I provided participants with documentation of the installation's presentation and discussed with them the ensuing conversations with the spectators. I maintained (and still have)

⁴⁰ 'Trust is related to absence in time and in space...Trust is basically bound up, not with risk, but with contingency. Trust always carries the connotation of reliability in the face of contingency outcomes, whether these concern the actions of individuals or the operation of systems' (Giddens, 2009, p. 33).

relationships with many of the participants. By investing in these relationships, in the sociality produced by the work, it became possible to see how, through trust, systems – whether through trust in what Giddens calls ‘*faceless commitments*’ (trust in systems like the ones constructed in this work)⁴¹ or in ‘*face work commitments*’ (trust in persons such as the trust built amongst the participants and I) – can function as we might hope (pp. 80-89).

The work received many positive responses. As understood from the comments spectators made after the work, it was perceived as relevant and timely. More importantly, as I overheard from conversations in passing, spectators continued to discuss the work and the question of violence over the two days of the symposium, creating yet another concentric circle around the work, which I hoped would continue to expand. In addition, Ana Bigotte Veira, one of the invited participants, and AADK, an artist network based in Berlin, invited me to present *Talking with Strangers: What is violence?* in Lisbon at Galeria Boavista, displacing the installation/the dialogue about violence itself to another country.

Although many aspects of the economies in which the work was embedded became apparent through the work’s presentation, I find that the most constructive way to reflect on these is to discuss three negative responses to the work in its presentation in London, as I think that that is where the potential impact of such a work might be located. The articulation of why one might not ‘like’ a work reveals the ideas and values that the person holds and, by default, those of

⁴¹ ‘[T]he development of faith in symbolic tokens or expert systems, which taken together’ he calls ‘*abstract systems*’ (Giddens, 2009, pp. 80-89).

the work. It can also reveal the weaknesses or the lack of consideration of aspects of its creation and/or presentation.

Most spectators thought the work raised questions about the role of performance and of the artist today and many contributed to the conversation through thought-provoking comments about the importance of a shift in the artist's relationship to the outside world in the contemporary moment. However, three spectators voiced their objections to the work. One of the associate researchers vehemently questioned the potential of this kind of work. From my understanding, the objection was, first, that this work could not be considered a performance and second, that the work was too explicit / too political / not ambiguous enough to afford any kind of potential. The first comment reveals a clash of two different visions of performance. My approach in creating this work considered the Performance Studies field (in which the *Performance Matters* project was situated) as a field that is inclusive, experimental, a field that defies boundaries between disciplines, that questions binary oppositions and what matters in the contemporary world and how it may be interrogated through performance. In addition, the installation, despite its materiality, was, for me, a performance of the ideas that the objects contributed embodied and a performance, through them, of the lived experiences of violence. Moreover, I the work for me would have been incomplete without the conversation with the spectators, which I considered the embodied and extended conversation that was generated from the objects of the installation.

The second, interrelated to the first, comment reflects itself the *Performance Matters* project's concern with the cultural value of performance and reveals the

different values attributed to artworks. From my understanding, the concern here was with the work's perceived lack of ambiguity that would allow for the spectator to co-author it. It also reminds us of the argument that Shannon Jackson (2011) made in the Introduction to this thesis with regards to a work's perceived value and social engagement depending on the perspective (visual arts, performance studies, theatre) that a viewer approaches it. Although I tend to agree with this line of thinking (the importance of the work allowing spaces for the space to co-author it), I do not think that because the work was relatively explicit it prevented ambiguity or the openness to different responses. The emphasis of the work was elsewhere: in the co-creation of a space of conversation from which different responses to a specific subject ensued and which were further opened up to discussion through the conversation with spectators.

The second objection allows me to return to the turn in the conversation I promised earlier: to a conversation about the violence inflicted on Greece in the form of the austerity measures, as well as from Golden Dawn against immigrants and anti-fascists. A spectator came to me at the end of the work complaining that I was violent myself by steering the conversation towards Greece and the socioeconomic crisis, which, as he expressed, was not of relevance to him. Although the steering of the conversation was not effected by me but by another spectator (and even before this by the object-responses of participants in the installation), this objection is quite important. Of interest here is first, the perception of the move to that conversation as violent in itself and second, the perception of its (ir)relevance. The two comments are immediately related. First, I believe that it is only if the conversation was considered to someone irrelevant that it could have been perceived as violent. Second, the issue of relevance is

important to this work – and to this thesis as a whole. Here we see different world and political views clash. I consider that what happens in another country – anywhere in the world – always matters, because human beings are affected; and that always matters. In the case of Greece, the problems faced signalled problems of larger implications across – at least – Europe: of a failing democracy and of the problems resulting from the current economic system. These affect everyone and therefore are relevant.

Finally, the third objection came from a performer and activist. From my understanding of his comments at the respondents' panel at the end of the symposium, this spectator considered problematic firstly, the work's predetermined agenda of discussion, and secondly the whole of the work as too static and cerebral. Again, the value systems of the work and of the spectator were at play: the open discussion was perceived as problematic because it began with a proposition. However, every artwork is some kind of a proposition. This work's proposition was to question what violence is. The discussion with the spectators, an extension of this proposition, asked the same question and afforded the rejection of this proposition and the suggestion of another by the spectators. A discussion is not static, but moves where the dialogists take it. However, it must be acknowledged that spectators may not feel free to take the dialogue in a different direction, even though they were explicitly welcomed to do so. As in any situation of this kind – where the artist is present and initiates the discussion – certain power relations are implied and/or assumed, even if the person considered to be in a position of power explicitly gives permission to others to operate freely. In addition, because the project from the beginning – and as indicated in the event programme and the website – made a clear proposition, spectators were informed

ahead of time about its concerns and could choose not to engage with it if they did not find it appealing.

The comment about the work being static and cerebral leads again to a conversation about what is valued in the performance world and by whom. Here, it seemed that cerebral and static were part of binary oppositions, which I do not find fruitful: cerebral versus visceral/bodily/intuitive and static versus moving. The work consisted of static objects and involved people sitting in seats, but I did not consider it 'immobile' nor cerebral. Its movement and viscosity was located in each participant's experience of violence and the sharing of this experience through an object. This sharing then moved to a discussion between spectators who also shared their lived and embodied experiences of violence. The project's focus was on a conversation with 'strangers' and the articulation in language and objects of these embodied experiences. Although movement and viscosity in this work may have functioned partially at a metaphorical level, this spectator's view does reveal what is privileged here: the work is perceived to privilege the mind over the body instead of, according to the comment, the body over the mind. Perhaps this privileging was built into the work's concept, which urged participants and spectators to think, not act; not yet, anyway.

What is revealed from all three comments/objections to the work is firstly, the impact that the medium of the work's presentation and its underlying conventions had on the meaning and experience of the work (Hantelmann, 2010; Jackson, 2011) and secondly, the individual spectators' value and ideological systems in relation to those of the work. As with any artist, my political stance is built into the construction of the artwork and becomes evident through choices of aesthetics and

the relationships that the artist creates in the economies within and outside the work. Although Boris Groys argues that '[t]he politics of art has to do less with its impact on the spectator than with the decisions that lead to its emergence in the first place' and, therefore, 'contemporary art should be analysed not in terms of aesthetics' ('from the perspective of the art consumer'), but instead 'in terms of poetics' ('from [the perspective] of the art producer') (2010, pp. 15-16), I believe that both poetics and aesthetics are important in the consideration of the politics of an artwork. Aesthetics is politics, for it reveals and proposes a certain value and ideological system. As an art producer myself, I made specific decisions that can be considered 'aesthetic' and which were political in themselves. First and foremost, the establishment of a system of rules by which all participants, including myself, had to abide. This kind of decision can be itself considered a violent act: an 'act of unconditional, sovereign violence that initially installs any democratic order' (Groys 2010, p. 59). However, unlike in our current political and economic system, participation was voluntary – the participants and the spectators only participated in the system because they wanted to and because they felt that its concerns were also important to them – and they could withdraw their participation at any time. I believe, as I am arguing through this thesis, that an artwork is what it does through the economy of relations it produces. Every artwork creates a specific economy of relations within itself (through the relations it creates amongst its elements via its dramaturgy and materiality and with the spectator in the manner he or she is addressed), as well as with the economies (the context, the place of its presentation and the larger economy) in which it is embedded. And it is through these specific economies of relation that the work questions and/or reproduces existing ideas, values and systems. I think that *Talking with Strangers: What is*

Violence? might have been violent, but in the sense of being disruptive of the expected ways of making, thinking and situating work in its economies.

This work raised a number of questions with which I approach and ask of Jérôme Bel's work in Chapter 4: questions about the necessity of making activist or explicitly political work; questions about where the radicality and the potential of an artwork to effect change might lie; questions about the ethical position of the producer; and questions about what economy of relations within the artwork can effect change in our contemporary moment. Ethics (i.e. the ethical position of the producer, the production of ethical encounters in an artwork and what that might mean) and economy (i.e. the economy of relations of an artwork, the neoliberal capitalist economy) are two terms that continue to come up in my thinking and doing throughout this thesis.

Section I, then, closes having attempted to nuance a relationship between art, politics and the social (the relations artwork produce) in the current economy by examining Sehgal's works *Ann Lee* (2011) and *These Associations* (2012), as well as '*Inter-Vention*' 1: *Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality: A Lecture-Performance* (2011) and '*Inter-Vention*' 2: *Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?*. The section pointed to the importance of an economy of relations (within the work and of the work with the economies that is embedded) that questions the function of the work and the role of all participants in (re)producing ideas, values and practices; that gives time and pays attention to the *kind* of relationships artworks produce, to trust built and promises made; and that, by considering these relationships, tries to resist ethics and rationalities of the current economy. Section II will connect the relationship drawn thus far between

art, politics and the social to ethics. I begin with an 'Inter-Vention' of a different kind, a theoretical manoeuvre, that is concerned with the relationship between the terms 'ethics' and 'economy', before moving on to discuss Bel's work: how it might relate to these two terms and how it might address the aforementioned questions.

SECTION II

In this section, I will attempt to connect the relationship drawn thus far between art, politics and the social to that of ethics. I begin with an 'Inter-Vention' of a different kind, a theoretical manoeuvre that is concerned with the relationship between the terms 'ethics' and 'economy', before moving on to discuss Bel's work (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4): how it might relate to these two terms and how it might address the questions arising from Section I. My work *Martyro* ('Inter-Vention' 4) is located within Chapter 4 in order to point out how the work's making and presentation influenced my reading of Bel's work.

'INTER-VENTION' 3

(a theoretical manoeuvre)

On Ethics and Economy

This text is concerned with the relationship between ethics and economy. As I have suggested thus far, an artwork's potential to effect change outside of the frame of the artwork itself lies in the potential that emerges from the economy of relations that the work produces within itself and from the manner that it relates to the economies in which it is embedded: from the production of ethical encounters with people, institutions and systems. It is this relationship between economy and ethics that interests me here. I begin by offering an account of 'economy's origin and etymology, as well as of its history, tracing the changing ethics attached to the term. I suggest that, if we are to intervene in the current economy, we are in need of a redefinition of the term 'economy' itself and I propose such a redefinition. I first rehabilitate a Byzantine era definition of economy: economy as 'support'. I then extend this definition to 'economy is support of the "other"'. With this redefinition I want to point to the ethical implications of the term itself. I conclude by suggesting the implications of such a redefinition for the role of art in our contemporary moment.

1. When Did 'Economy' Become a Dirty Word? – The Origin and Etymology of 'Economy' and its Relation to Ethics

Preclassical economics

The term 'oikonomia' was first introduced by the ancient Greeks. The origin of the word derives from the noun 'oikos' [οἶκος] and means 'house' and the verb 'nemein' [νέμειν] which means 'to deal out, to dispense' (Baloglou, 2010, p. 11), 'to manage'. In other words 'oikonomia' is defined as 'household management'. In

Politics, Aristotle defines ‘nomos’ as ‘arrangement, and consequently, their harmonization for their better result’ (*Politics*, I 10, 1258 a21–26), expanding the term from household management or state administration and widening its application – as I will do in due time with Bel’s work.

Greek scholars were the first to deal extensively in writing with concerns of practical philosophy such as ethics, politics and economics that were conceived as interdependent (Baloglou, 2010, pp. 10-11):

In the post-Socratic demarcation of disciplines, *ethics* was the study of personal and interindividual behavior; *politics* was the discourse on the ordering of the public sphere; and the term *oikonomia* referred to the material organization of the household and of the estate, and to supplementary discourses on the financial affairs of the city-state (polis-state) administration. Greek economic thought formed an integral but subordinated part of the two major disciplines, ethics and politics. *The discourse of the organization of the Oikos and the economic ordering of the polis was not conceived to be an independent analytical sphere of thought* (Baloglou, 2010, p. 11, my emphasis).

It is in Aristotle’s *Eudemean Ethics* that we first find the inextricable connection of politics, economy and ethics. Aristotle’s view on the role of the individual in society (*Polis*) and in the *Oikos* presents a very specific ethics of being in the world, where man has a political as well as an economic ontology (‘politikon zoon’ and ‘oikonomikon zoon’ [a ‘political and house-holding animal’]) and both are important for the benefit of society (*Eudemean Ethics* VIII 10, 1242 a22–26). (Of course, the support of slavery presents yet a different kind of ethics).

Aristotle also made a distinction between ‘oikonomia’ and ‘chrematistike’ (acquisition) and a moral evaluation of its different kinds. He considered the exchange with money ‘unnecessary’ and considered it problematic, for, if profit or desire to acquire more money are the driving forces of acquisition, then there is no

limit to how much one will seek to acquire. Aristotle considered the worst form of acquisition usury, because it aims at 'breed[ing]' money ('currency, the son of currency'). Usury 'makes a profit from currency itself (M-M'-M'') instead of making it from the process which currency was meant to serve' (*Politics*, I 9-11). It is argued that it is precisely this disapproval of exchange with money that prevented economic analysis during that time (Baloglou, 2010, p. 18). In relation to economy and ethics and also to our discussion here, what is most interesting in Aristotle's thought are the reasons he provides for the *moral* evaluation of the different types of acquisition. For Aristotle, what becomes problematic is that when an acquisition is not necessary then one cannot set limits. We can easily draw parallels here to our current economy.

In the following centuries, several groups of ancient Greeks developed Aristotle's ideas. The Hellenes extended 'oikonomia' to the handling of political affairs, the 'good organisation of any arms equipment' and the 'general handling of political affairs in a polis' or 'the organized handling of wealth in the Polis' (Baloglou, 2010, pp. 24-25). They also 'use[d] the term oikonomia meaning in a figurative sense' for 'any environment in which the capacity to manage a complex structure – big or small – well, can be applied with success' (ibid.) The Stoics believed that 'the establishment of the Oikos is the "first politeia"' (ibid., p. 33) – a first conception of microeconomics. They agreed with Aristotle on their conception of trade (its ultimate goal was the benefit of society not of individual people) and connected ethics to economy through a discussion of value and justice. The Stoics became influential to the Roman philosophers Cicero and Seneca (ibid., p. 34). The Neopythagoreans, due to the organisation of Kingdoms in the Hellenistic world, compare the organisation of the *Oikos* to that of the *Polis* and to that of the world

(*cosmos*) (ibid., p. 39). Around 300 BC, writings about utopias evidence the desire for an egalitarian society and a division of labour that alternates in order to keep the worker happy (ibid., p. 44).

The citizens lived together in associations ('kata syggeneias kai systemata') of 400 members each (Diod. Sic. II 57). There was collective ownership of all the means of production, and the communism extended also to the family (Diod. Sic. II 58) (Baloglou, 2010, p. 44).

In the Byzantine Era, although usury was approved and slavery is considered 'a respectable private property institution', economic processes such as price, interest and profit are related to justice (Baloglou, 2010, pp. 53-58). The Arab-Islamic economic thought was influenced by that of Plato as well as Aristotle and was greatly developed by Ibn Khaldun. Khaldun is considered to have 'discovered a great number of fundamental economic notions a few centuries before their official births' (ibid., p. 72). Arab-Islamic authors of the time believed that the function of the state as regulator of private property is important: that the state's role is to create socio-economic balance of private interests and public pursuits in order to eradicate poverty and inequality; the state must regulate the market for the welfare of the community (ibid., pp. 67-72).

As the preceding shows, the early preclassical thinkers considered how various kinds of economic activities impacted justice and the quality of life and, importantly, acknowledged the efficacy of 'nonmarket-allocating mechanisms' (Landreth and Colander, 2001, p. 28). In contrast, most modern economists focus on the efficiency of resource allocation and so-called 'free markets' (ibid.).

These concerns and the accompanying shift in the ethics attached to economy can be first observed in the period 17th-18th century with Mercantilism, where the

emphasis is placed on the interest and profit of the merchants and the nation but not in what Aristotle referred as the *eudaimonia* of each individual which depended on *justice* in the *Oikos*. It is important to emphasise here that individual happiness for Aristotle ((hu)man's *eudaimonia*) is only understood in relationship to society and is considered to be possible only in a society of *justice*.

The dominant economic literature and practice of the period between 1500 and 1750 known as *Mercantilism* (the work of merchant businessmen) 'focused on questions of economic policy and was usually related to a particular interest the merchant-writer was trying to promote' (Landreth and Colander, 2001, p. 46). Mercantilists believed that the wealth of a nation depended on the accumulation of gold and silver. Therefore, since 'the goal of economic activity [was] defined in terms of national output and not in terms of national consumption, poverty for the individual benefit[ed] the nation' (ibid., p. 47). It is here that we first observe a major shift in the relationship between ethics to economy, for, unlike in preclassical times, economy's interest is now not in the welfare of all citizens. *Justice*, therefore, is taken out of the equation.

Classical economic thought

During the industrial revolution (around 1760-1840), mercantilism – what we now call protectionism – was replaced by capitalism. This resulted in economic growth and a market-oriented economy that divided society into an economic and a political realm (Boettke, 2014). It led to widespread inequality, as the ethics of this economy were not (as with the early preclassical thinkers) concerned with equality and the individual's *eudaimonia* in a just *Oikos*. The emphasis shifted to the individual, her happiness and pursuit of profit.

In *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith argues that every individual employs capital not for the benefit of the society but for his own profit, which he considers necessary (Smith, [1776] 1904). For him, capital accumulation required free markets and a system of private property, predicated on an unequal distribution of income (ibid.).

It is this inequality advocated by classical economics, that Karl Marx critiques. In *Das Kapital*, Marx examines the labour theory of value – according to which the value of an exchanged commodity was determined by the labour that went into its production – and the theory of surplus value which he suggests explained the exploitation of labour by capital, because the workers were paid only a proportion of the value their work had created (Marx, 1981). In *The Communist Manifesto* and in the Preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*, Marx suggests an *ethics of care* for men's consciousness which is determined by his social existence and which is in turn determined by relations of production (Marx, 1913). With his work on the proper distribution of income, Marx raises ethical issues, issues of equality and justice.

Economic Liberalism & Neoliberalism (Mid-20th - Early 21st Century/Present)

In contrast to John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) who supported that the state should have strong control of the markets in order to deal with economic problems and enable economic growth through the manipulation of aggregate demand (Keynesianism theory), Friedrich August von Hayek (1899–1992) and Milton Friedman (1912–2006), fathers of neoliberalism, advocated for global free trade

and an expansion of the scope of economic analysis, which become the foundation of neoliberalism (Foucault, 2008).

Friedman understood economics as 'the science of how a particular society solves its economic problems', which exist 'whenever scarce means are used to satisfy alternative ends' (Friedman, 1962, p. 6). He later suggests that economics is about observed behavior, no matter what the cause of this behavior might be. It is this definition that creates a shift in the understanding of economics from a subject matter to an *approach* that is concerned with social interaction and predicting behaviour (Friedman, 1953).

Nowadays, economics is generally understood to be a social science that examines how scarce resources, which have alternative uses, are managed by individuals, group or organisations. Its focus is 'largely on market processes, which have replaced the church, tradition, and the state as the primary resource-allocating mechanism' (Landreth and Colander, 2001, pp. 1-2).

As elaborated in the introduction to this thesis, the term neoliberalism – the name attributed to the current globally dominant capitalist model of economy – started being used mostly in the 1990s (Barnett, 2010, p. 269). In the introduction I also traced the progression of the term from a theory to an ideology, a political practice, a governmental programme and economic policies. I will not repeat these here, but suggest once again that, aside the economic effects, neoliberalism's rationalities and ethics are equally catastrophic to the social, for economic rationality is extended to all sphere of life.

2. Towards an 'Old' Definition of Economy

By comparing the relationship of ethics to economy today, it becomes evident that we are very far from an Aristotelian understanding of economy as a discipline subordinated to politics and ethics and of its goal as the *justice* in the *Polis* for man's *eudaimonia*. In the face of the ethics of the current economy and the economic and social reality that we find ourselves in, French philosopher Bernard Stiegler calls for an investment in 'common desire' ('what Aristotle called *philia*'): an investment in the political and social, which in turn will 'form the basis for a new type of economic investment' (Stiegler, 2010, p. 6). I suggest that a redefinition of the term 'economy' itself might help us in rethinking the ethics and function of the current economy and I propose here such a redefinition.

In Kriaras's (2014) Greek dictionary 'oikonomia' is defined among other definitions as 'support, attention, regard, trust, aid, assistance, care, help, relief, cooperation, the joining with another's forces, collaboration, co-working'. Kriaras offers as an example for this definition the following: 'ἦύρεν την ... από καλοῦ φίλου οικονομίαν [he found...from a good friend's support/economy] (Λίβ. Sc. 2737)'. I located this text in the book *Libistros and Rhodamne* ([early 16th century], 1935). *Libistros and Rhodamne* is a Greek Medieval popular love-romance novel of Byzantine folk literature of the 14th to early 16th century (*The Foundation of the Hellenic World*, 2014).

It is this definition – economy as 'support' – that I rehabilitate and I extend to 'economy is support of the "other"'. With this redefinition of economy I want to point to the importance of an ethics of care and justice. I also want to question

what 'support' might mean in relation to different conceptualisations of 'the other', whether 'the other' is an artwork, the spectator, an idea or an economic system. I understand 'support' not only as translated from the Greek definition of 'oikonomia', that is as 'care, support, assistance, the joining of forces' and so forth, but also as the act of giving time and attention, being in solidarity, keeping promises, maintaining trust, questioning, gifting, sharing, challenging, disagreeing, resisting. Acknowledging the importance of these different ways of 'supporting "the other"' became apparent in my experience of working in the collective of the participants in Tino Sehgal's *These Associations*.

It is the redefinition of economy as 'support of "the other"' that I suggest might be most useful in rethinking today's economy by enabling us to rethink the function of the larger economy and the manner it affords us to behave, think and relate to others, to time and to space, but also in rethinking how we want to be supported whether by an artwork or by society and how we might want to support the economies in which we are embedded. If we are to intervene in the neoliberal economy we need to first question and change the ethics upon which it is based. If we redefine/rethink economy as 'support of "the other"', perhaps we can build an economy on an ethics of support, care and justice. In the end, how we want to support and be supported is an ethical judgement based on our values, morals and need for and understanding of justice. My redefinition, and most importantly the consideration of economy in ethical terms, colours my reading of Jérôme Bel's work. Let us see how Bel is able to 'support "the other"' through the economy of relations, the sociality he produces with his work and the manner in which his work relates to the economies in which it is embedded: the economy of dance, theatre, culture and the neoliberal capitalist economy.

CHAPTER 3

JÉRÔME BEL AND THE ECONOMY OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE

This chapter introduces and contextualises Jérôme Bel's work. First, I offer views that theorists, artists and reviewers hold about it. I then describe the economy in which Jérôme Bel works: one that is contested and ill-defined, and where financial, institutional and ideological interests interact as the 'field' of contemporary dance. I do so through a discussion of the different names attributed to this economy: 'contemporary', 'postmodern' and 'conceptual' dance. I suggest that what joins artists such as Jérôme Bel, Xavier Le Roy, Vera Mantero, Boris Charmatz, Raimund Hoghe, Emio Greco PC, João Fiadeiro and Benoît Lachambre together is not the frame of 'contemporary', 'postmodern' or 'conceptual' dance, nor aesthetics or the interrogation of dance as a medium. It is instead an understanding of the importance of the politics and the role of the economy of their work in larger economies and how they are embedded in them.

1. On Jérôme

Jérôme Bel's work has influenced the thinking and making of artists and scholars of his and my generation, including myself. It has therefore been widely discussed by theorists, artists and reviewers of dance and performance. Ramsay Burt, begins his essay on Jérôme Bel in *Fifty Contemporary Choreographers* by questioning whether Bel 'belong[s] in a book about contemporary choreography' for 'his ideas and performance work directly attack so many of the assumptions underlying much choreographic practice' ([2009] 2011, p. 42). Writing in 2009, by which time Bel has created and presented all of his well-known work, Burt expresses the opinion that Bel has created 'beautifully constructed, highly economical and extremely smart works' that 'generate moments of sometimes witty, but

sometimes uncanny and uncomfortable, absence which challenge the expectation that good art projects a powerful, reassuring presence' (ibid., pp. 46-47). His works, Burt argues, are characterised by a 'blankness' which 'becomes a screen that reflects back to spectators their own desire and expectations with a directness that reminds them of their own potential for innovation and change' (ibid.).

Una Bauer analyses Bel's work *Jérôme Bel* in relation to his attempts at a 'zero degree of signification' (2008a, p. 39). In her article, Bauer proposes that Bel's work functions as a question; one that

inspires a dialogue: a question that asks not what choreography is and what it is not but what are the processes of its construction and understanding as choreography, how is choreography constructed? And a proposal is framed: choreography is not constructed through the successful staging of particular representations, or through the impossibility of their staging (and thus, through the success at staging abstract movement) but through *the movement of embodied thought* which refuses to fix itself in particular recognizable types of oppositional discourses, or oppositional response structures' (2008a, p. 39, my emphasis).

In an interview with Bauer about his work and philosophy, Bel explains that his 'goal is never choreography. Choreography is just a frame, a structure, a language where much more than dance is inscribed' (2008b, p. 42).

Claire Bishop remarks that the manner in which Bel engages with theory in his work *The Last Performance* appears to her as an effort 'to democratize not just contemporary dance but also critical theory' (2009). She believes that *The Last Performance*,

[a]s an explicit work of citation, both theoretical and artistic...is essential to understanding how his extremely reductive pieces, which risk sounding (and looking) like one-liners at first, have a complexity of ambition and selfreflexivity that far exceed their initial premise...[his work] shares the preoccupations and discourse of contemporary art: appropriation, de-skilling, and spectacle (Bishop, 2009).

André Lepecki has written extensively on Bel's work. In his book *Exhausting dance: Performance and the politics of movement* (2006), he discusses Bel's critique of representation in relation to the formation of subjectivity through Bel's use of the body, of repetition, stillness, language and the architecture of the theatre (2006).

In his discussion of Bel's work *Jérôme Bel*, Lepecki argues that the work

challenges the grounding of dance by operating a thorough dismantling of the blackbox, parody of its optical, acoustic, representational and spatial modernist presuppositions...*Jérôme Bel* indicates that dance's ontology and foundation lies somewhere else: in the unstable tension between presence and absence, light and shadow, the space between bare flesh and hidden flesh (Lepecki, 2004a, p. 175).

Tim Etchells examines Bel's *The Show Must Go On* in relation to the work's structure and use of rules. In his well-known text on the work, he notes that due to its simplicity, the spectator 'faced with less' ends up 'finding more'. As he puts it astutely with the title of this text, 'Sometimes...people are getting more and more clever watching us be more and more stupid' (2004, p. 199). In his writing about *Shirtology*, Etchells observes that Bel's 'interests are located just at the slippery, evocative meeting point between the physical and the philosophical' (1997).

Xavier Le Roy, in a written dialogue with Alain Buffard, comments on the unfolding of ideas and on humour in Bel's work. He describes watching Bel's work as

some of the rare times when I've been able to see an idea developing on the stage of a theatre. As it unfolds, it gives you not only pause for thought and calls upon your intellectual capacities but also moments of poetry and humour of which the definition given by Isabell Stengers corresponds perfectly to Jérôme's work: 'I call "humour" any capacity to recognise that you are yourself a product of the story whose construction you are trying to follow and in a sense where humour is distinct from irony' (Buffard and Le Roy, 1999).

Buffard comments on the composition of Bel's work. He notes that Bel, in constructing his work, 'follow[s] the axiom of the unity of time, space and action, a

compositional concept inherited from classical theatre tradition (Buffard and Le Roy, 1999). From there, he widens the performative scope of the stage formed by dance, singing and theatre' (ibid.).

Numerous dance and performance critics have written about Bel's work. Of most interest here, both because it regards *The Show Must Go On*, which I am later discussing and because it evidences resistances to what might be thought of as dance and, therefore, as choreography, is Kristin Hohenadel's (2005) review of *The Show Must Go On*. Hohenadel observes that 'The French daily La Croix described Jérôme Bel as a "nonchoreographer of nonpieces presented on stage preferably by nondancers"', a description that Bel embraces. In this interview with Hohenadel, Bel shares with her incidents during and reviews of *The Show*:

Spectators yelled and hissed, stormed the stage, demanded refunds...one critic slapped another. The reviewer from *Le Monde* wrote, 'The show is in the seats'...When *The Show Must Go On* toured Israel last year a woman in the audience mooned the house, and someone jumped on stage and kicked a dancer' (Bel cited in Hohenadel, 2005).

As I have illustrated here, over the years, Bel's work has elicited both extremely positive responses and very negative ones. It has also been discussed, as the aforementioned texts by theorists, artists, reviewers and Bel himself evidence, from multiple points of view, including regarding his place in the contemporary dance economy. The following section examines the contested and ill-defined economy of contemporary dance of which Bel's work is considered a part.

2. Contemporary Dance and its Discontents

Although Bel refers to himself as a theatre director whose subject is dance (Bel cited in Bauer, 2008b, p. 43), and more recently identified himself as a visual artist (Bel cited in Goldberg, 2012), depending on who one talks to, he is known as one of the choreographers of 'contemporary dance', 'postmodern dance' or 'conceptual dance' who initiated a new understanding of what dance can be and do. The terms 'contemporary', 'postmodern', and 'conceptual' dance attributed to the economy of which Bel's work is considered a part indicate a complicated history of relation of dance to time, to itself as medium and to its role, revealing the dance economy's problems and potentials.

'Contemporary' & 'Postmodern' Dance (or Dance and Contemporaneity)

Drawing from its etymology (con-tempe = with time), the 'contemporary' can be understood as the 'coming together in time'. Live performance in general can be thought of as the coming together of performers and spectators to witness something ephemeral, something that can only be witnessed in and for the time that these participants come together. Frédéric Pouillaude believes that 'strictly speaking there is only contemporary dance', for dance is 'a presence to presence in a space of simultaneity of itself...and to others' (2007, p. 127). He understands contemporaneity as 'a structure of temporality' rather than an historical figure or an epoch, 'a neutral simultaneity, a contingent coexistence', and therefore the contemporary as 'all that coexists, all that belongs to a particular time' (ibid). By extension, dance for him is the object produced by this exchange and co-presence of performers and spectators. He believes that '[i]t is only by means of an intentional address and an explicit exchange between performers and onlookers

(*regardants*) that a third object can be extracted from dance, opening the possibility for a work' (ibid). Of course, Pouillaude's understanding of the dance work as that which emerges from the co-presence and exchange of performers and spectators can be applied to all live performance and therefore his definition of contemporary dance is not very useful in describing the work of interest here – although it does reveal the problems in defining dance. What is more useful for this conversation is his account of the transformation of dance since the 1960s.

Pouillaude explains that the 1980s dance world was not conscious of the importance of the relationship of dance to the moment of its instantiation, to contemporaneity. The relationship was not questioned but rather ignored. Works were repeated as part of a repertoire in different venues, irrespective of their different context of performance:

These 'all-terrain' works, to some extent, play a game of denial by abstracting themselves from the eventhood of their giving to view...This putting into brackets of the fact of the performance situation had as a consequence the absence of a challenge to its very form (Pouillaude, 2007, p. 130).

Pouillaude believes that, during the mid-1990s, a 'mutation' took place, reversing the understanding and treatment of dance. Although critics at the time considered it a local passing fashion and gave it names such as 'New French scene' (*Nouvelle scène française*) and 'Young dance' (*Jeune danse*), he argues that this mutation initiated a radical change that influenced the production of dance until the present day: 'there are some things that one simply cannot do anymore, or at least not with the same naiveté: narration, expression as well as composition or virtuosity' and includes in a footnote as examples of this new kind of dance 'Alain Buffard, Jérôme Bel, Boris Charmatz, Emmanuelle Huynh, Xavier Leroy, Alain Michard, Laurent Pichaud, and Loïc Touzé' (Pouillaude, 2007, p. 130). He calls this mutation 'the

reflective work of performance' and analyses its five major features, the five major causes of this mutation. He considers the first to be the 'dissolution of fixed companies' – that consisted of a 'team of stable and salaried collaborators' – and their replacement by a group of individuals that came together temporarily for a specific and defined project (ibid., p. 130). He believes that this change was both due to financial reasons, as well as a result of the 'realization that the reciprocal commitment of the dancer and the choreographer could not extend beyond the immediate needs of such and such a project. The precariousness of the workforce then becomes an internal artistic norm' (ibid., p. 131).

Anna Pakes observes 'the artistic development of French contemporary dance is mutually implicated with its institutional environment' (Pakes, 2004, pp. 22-23).

She explains that for Michel and Ginot (1995),

the frameworks of the contemporary danceworld are dominated by the dynamics of a dance market, the hierarchies of the funding system, the weight of resource-hungry institutions and the pressure to increase audience numbers as well as meeting existing expectations... 'thus, as its "product" has become increasingly standardised, contemporary dance has moved closer to a conception of the dance work as having to respond to a fixed number of pre-established codes' (Pakes, 2004, pp. 22-23).

It is these concerns that Pouillaude appears to refer to as one of the causes for his first mutation. He makes an astute observation here that needs to be further elaborated:

Here, it is necessary to quote French choreographer Boris Charmatz's exemplary formulation, where the intermittence is defined as '(social) precariousness assumed to the benefit of (artistic) exchanges' (Charmatz and Launay 2003:139). The punch lies of course in the play of the parenthesis: once the 'artistic' parenthetical is eliminated, what is it that remains but a formulation of MEDEF's economic program? (Pouillaude, 2007, p. 131).

MEDEF (*Mouvement des Entreprises de France/Movement of the Enterprises of France*) is the largest union of employers in France. Established in 1998 (MEDEF, 2014) its purpose is to

support companies and the entrepreneurial spirit...The MEDEF interacts with every level of civil society, even with stakeholders who are traditionally far removed from the business world, like youths, teachers, journalists, members of the legal community, local officials and artists. It sets in motion a broad range of concrete initiatives with partners in its push to 'Make France a Winner' (MEDEF, 2014).

Like most neoliberal private organisations, their interest lies in making profit despite the precarity and inequality that results from the enforcement of their economic programmes.⁴² Pouillaude emphasises that the shift in the labour of dance has directly affected it in two ways: first, in how dance work was conceptualised – for the author of the work is now a temporarily constructed collective of individuals and the notion of company and the repertoire ceases to be possible. Second, in 'recogni[sing]...its inescapable contemporaneity' (Pouillaude, 2007, p. 131). What needs to also be noted is that the change in artist practices might have resulted in further funding reduction because funders could not think of dance/performance making in terms outside of a company. (Of course, relative to any other country in Europe, established companies in France are still funded well). And these reductions or funding cuts furthered the artists' precarity, making it impossible to create companies that investigated regularly this new type of artistic practice.

⁴² In a footnote, Pouillaude emphasises that '*Régime de l'intermittence*' – a 'very specific French system of "unemployment insurance" (*assurance chômage*) reserved for the "arts of performance" workers' considering 'the specific instability of performing' and 'guarantee[ing] a better and longer remuneration between periods of work' – was cut by 'the government and MEDEF'. This resulted in a 'major social conflict...in France in 2003' making it 'clear then that this system wasn't a simple compensation for unstable work schedules but a real condition for freedom and creativity in the field of performing arts' (Pouillaude, 2007, p. 131).

Pouillaude considers the second cause of the mutation the re-creation of the work by adapting it to its new context of presentation as a result of its different host funders: 'The mutation consists, economically speaking, in fusing together production and presenting/touring' (2007, p. 132). His third feature relates to the work's 'writing': to its composition. The work, Pouillaude observes, is no longer made according to notions of fixity and reiterability. Instead, it is made as a structure, the elements of which can be performed every time according to the needs of the work, the moment of performance and the context of presentation. The change in the definition of dance as a medium constitutes the fourth feature of Pouillaude's mutation. He claims that, although the 1960s and 1970s introduced pedestrian and everyday movement in 'dance', until the mid-1990s there was still a differentiation between the dance works that involved dance movement and those that involved movement that anyone can perform and therefore a relative agreement about the identity of dance. 'Everything can be dance today, including (and above all without a doubt) the more banal gesture or even the more absent and still one' (ibid., p. 132).

Although some have seen this questioning of dance's identity as a return to the 1960s and 1970s American postmodern dance, Pouillaude believes that there is a substantial difference. Whereas 1960s and 1970s postmodern dance questioned the ontology and limits of dance, the mutation that he points to in the mid-1990s is the questioning of performance itself, its ontology, its players and all that surrounds the performance event, through which dance as a medium is questioned

only secondarily and indirectly. This is what constitutes Pouillaude's fifth feature:

'the reflective opacification of the medium "show" (spectacle)⁴³' (2007, p. 132).

In the 1980s dance worked through a clear naiveté regarding the spectacular form, treating it as a medium that was impassable, neutral, and transparent. Through this medium, some choreographic 'worlds' were directly displayed, distant and autonomous, unaltered by relation and indifferent to the fact of giving themselves. The show was only a glimpse of these choreographic worlds and did not modify them at all...The show could only escape its essential duplicity by thematizing onstage its operation and in becoming its own object. Without the reflexivity of the spectacular medium, there can be no salvation! (Pouillaude, 2007, pp. 132-133).

It is important to note here that in a footnote, Pouillaude considers Bel's *The Show Must Go On* 'the paroxistic example of this new reflexivity of performance. This work is nothing other than an exhibition and thematization of conditions and developments of an ordinary and unquestioned "dance performance"' (2007, p. 133).

These five major features constitute what Pouillaude's calls 'the reflective work of performance' mutation (2007, p. 134). He considers this mutation neither modern nor postmodern, for, firstly, it is performance that is being reflected upon and not dance directly as a medium. And secondly, *with regards to dance as medium*, he considers this mutation only a repetition and adjustment of the American postmodern dance mutation leading to the realisation that the progression from and the breaking of the conventions of modernist logic are an illusion. It is

⁴³ It should be noted that there is no direct equivalent of the French 'spectacle' in English. *The Collins French-English Dictionary* (2014) offers the following translation for the French 'spectacle':

'masculine noun

1. (= *vision, scène*) "sight"
au spectacle de ... "at the sight of ..." se donner en spectacle (*pejorative*) "to make a spectacle of o.s.", "to make an exhibition of o.s."
à grand spectacle
2. (= *représentation*) "show"
3. (= *industrie*) "show business"

therefore, he believes, not postmodern because it repeats the American 'postmodern dance' that was never really 'postmodern' (ibid.). His reasoning for this, following Sally Banes's analysis in *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance* is as follows:

For the historic names that dance dresses itself in are out of sync with their artistic content. Indeed, at the risk of being paradoxical, we have to uphold that 'modern' dance (Laban, Wigman, Graham...) is classical: it is entirely organized according to the expressivity of a creator subject. And, in parallel, that the American 'postmodern dance' is modern: it moves by transgressing the limit and exceeding that which it is supposed to be, toward the elucidation of its own feature (Pouillaude, 2007, p. 134).

Pouillaude therefore considers the 1990s mutation in dance (and therefore Bel's work) neither modern nor postmodern, but contemporary: one that takes into account the unavoidable and necessary contemporaneity of the performance event and the coexistence of participants (performers and spectators), thematising both (2007, p. 134). However, several other theorists disagree or categorise differently the 'modern' and 'postmodern' period and include different artists in each.

Judith Mackrell tables the reading of philosopher David Michael Levin on the 'modern' and 'postmodern' periods in dance in his essay 'Postmodernism in Dance: Dance, Discourse and Democracy'. She explains that Levin disagrees with the idea that modernism 'covers all the avant garde movements from cubism through to surrealism' and that postmodernism 'takes off somewhere in the 1950s and 1960s' (1991, p. 40). This is because, for Levin, this categorisation does not acknowledge 'important points of difference and development' (ibid.) Therefore he first, uses the term 'avant garde' to refer to work that

was 'created in revolt against tradition', that 'had something new to say', and that 'looked for a new language with which to say it – his candidates for avant garde dance artists are the obvious ones, including Isadora Duncan, Mary Wigman, and Martha Graham (Mackrell, 1991 p. 40).

Second, he proposes that the term 'modernist' should only be used to refer to works that 'call into question their methods of representing the world, and which refer in some way to their own history, their own conventions and modes of construction' (1991 pp. 40-41). Mackrell observes that for Levin this category includes Balanchine and Cunningham, as well as 'Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown and Laura Dean, in whose works dance and the making of dance are the central subjects' (ibid.). The earlier works of both Rainer and Brown, he observes, 'embody a certain identifiable attitude towards dance: the use of pedestrian movement; the denial of meaning and spectacle; the use of tasks or games as structural devices, and so on' (ibid.). Levin suggests that postmodern works 'post-date and comment on modernist works and are far more radical in the way they play with their own conventions, embracing a range of styles, aesthetics and references within themselves' (ibid.). He suggests that postmodern work:

feels free to embrace both non-dance and virtuoso technique; feels able to address meaning without being committed to a coherent view of the world; may set up analytic structures and explode them; and does not have to make a clean break with traditional dance aesthetics, but may pastiche, parody or allude to them (Mackrell, 1991 p. 41).

Susan Leigh Foster, in her article 'The Signifying Body: Reaction and Resistance in Postmodern Dance' (1985), makes yet another differentiation. She considers that many works 'growing out of the Judson experimentation...establish a postmodern tradition in dance', in which she 'include[s] the Grand Union, Meredith Monk and the House, and the Twyla Tharp Dance Company' (Foster, 1985, p. 47). However, agreeing with Hal Foster's writing in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (1983), she argues that postmodern work should be split into two categories: 'reactionary' and 'resistive'. She names 'reactionary postmodernism' that 'which indiscriminately employs a heterogeneous array of styles and compositional methods in the name of rebellion', that 'mines the forms of the past

for their nostalgic and novel impact’, and that ‘reaffirms the traditional role of the viewer as admiring spectator’ (ibid.). In contrast, ‘resistive postmodernism’ is that which ‘undertakes a sustained and systematic examination of its own production...offers an ongoing inquiry into the implications of any choice of form’ and ‘includes its viewer in the formulation and critique of its own meaning’ (ibid.). For Susan Foster, the ‘resistive postmodernism’

arises as a counter-practice not only to the official culture of modernism but also to the ‘false normativity’ of a reactionary postmodernism. In opposition (but not only in opposition), a resistant postmodernism is concerned with a critical deconstruction of tradition, not an instrumental pastiche of pop- or pseudo- historical forms, with a critique of origins, not a return to them. In short, it seeks to question rather than exploit cultural codes, to explore rather than conceal social and political affiliations (Foster, 1985, p. 47).

Philip Auslander, in his review of Susan Foster’s book *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance* (1986), published a year after her aforementioned essay, includes Foster’s ‘schema clustering four tropes of rhetoric with modes of representation and choreographic examples (1986:236)’ provided here (Auslander, 1988, p. 9):

<i>Literary Trope</i>	<i>Choreographic Mode of Representation</i>	<i>Contemporary Choreographic Example</i>	<i>Historical Examples</i>
Metaphor	Resemblance	Hay	Late Renaissance European court spectacles (1550–1650)
Metonymy	Imitation	Balanchine	Neoclassical proscenium theatre ballets (1680–1760)
Synecdoche	Replication	Graham	American expressionist modern dance (1890–1950)
Irony	Reflection	Cunningham	Contemporary, postexpressionist experimental dance (1950–present)

Auslander notes that, for Foster, ‘these clusters become paradigms for different kinds of danced representation, which are transhistorical’ (Auslander, 1988, p. 9). For her, ‘any of the four types of representation may appear in the dance of any Western culture at any moment in history since the Renaissance’ (ibid., p. 8). Foster, Auslander explains, considers postmodern dance a ‘rupture of historical

significance' and therefore a fifth paradigm: the "reflexive choreography," which deconstructs the "objectivist" approach to movement associated with Merce Cunningham "to show the body's capacity to both speak and be spoken through in many different languages" (1986:188)' (ibid.). In addition, for Foster, in this kind of work, the spectator is included 'as an equal partner in the composition of the dance': she is "'a relatively immobile...performer" (1985:61; 1986:224) actively engaged in writing dancing rather than a passive spectator reading someone else's "dance"' (ibid.).

Auslander, believes that, like him, Foster sees the difference between modernism and postmodernism in the manner that Fredric Jameson does: that modernism 'still lays claim to the place and function vacated by religion, still draws its resonance from a conviction that through the work of art some authentic vision of the world is immanently expressed' (Auslander, 1988, p. 17).⁴⁴

It is evident that there is no consensus among theorists concerning what should be named modern or postmodern dance nor postmodern or contemporary. Nevertheless, in the current literature most dance studies theorists very generally refer to dance today as contemporary, to the 1960s and 1970s dance associated

⁴⁴ Auslander argues that '[a] genuinely resistant postmodern dance practice would undoubtedly be reflexive, but would find a way of remaining at the level of "sheer surface or superficiality" in order to "destroy the binding or absolute status of any representation" of bodies and subjects without slipping into the reification of those surfaces, as do Tharp's and other "slick and fashionable" practices. But reification may be inevitable (see Jameson 1981:115); it is entirely possible that self-deconstruction becomes self-reification at some point. Until the new mode of representing "the world space of multinational capitalism" that Jameson evokes in the epigraph to this review becomes possible, Hal Foster's notion of resistance is the best model we've got for a political art that can be effective within the terms of postmodern culture. The danger that this practice can turn into its opposite by reifying the representations it supposedly deconstructs is a danger that must be courted. At stake is the very possibility of political art during the post-modern period' (Auslander, 1988, p. 18).

with the Judson Dance Theatre as 'postmodernism' (see for example Kolb, 2013, pp. 31, 33,35) and to Cunningham as a 'modernist choreographer' (for example see Hoffbauer, 2014, p. 38).

Let us return to Pouillaude and his understanding of the relationship between dance in the 1960s and 1990s. The root of the problem in Pouillaude's thinking is considering 1990s dance only as a repetition and adjustment of the 1960s dance. Every new movement in any art form draws on and retains elements from previous movements, but that does not make the new movement simply a repetition and adjustment, as the rationale, politics, strategies and goals of the new movement are different. This is the case here. Dance in the 1990s draws on and retains elements and even rationales from the 1960s, but participates in a larger debate, common to theatre, about the interrogation of the ontology of performance, albeit still using dance as its material or dance understandings as its approach or subject matter. As with Bel's work, what is interrogated is what it means to be present and perform in the presence of others, in a specific space and context.

Following the logic in Hans-Thies Lehmann's 'post-dramatic theatre', would it not be more accurate to call what Pouillaude refers to as 'contemporary dance' instead 'post-dance choreography'? Lehmann argues that in the term 'post-dramatic'

'post' is to be understood neither as an epochal category, nor simply as a chronological 'after' drama, a 'forgetting' of the dramatic 'past', but rather as a rupture and a beyond that continue to entertain relationships with drama and are in many ways an analysis and 'anamnesis' of drama. To call theatre 'postdramatic' involves subjecting the traditional relationship of theatre to drama to deconstruction and takes account of the numerous ways in which this relationship has been refigured in contemporary practice since the 1970s (Lehmann, 2006, p. 2).

Yet, does the term 'post-dance choreography' I propose here suggest that this work is no longer 'dance', entirely missing what this kind of work aims to challenge? I personally do not think that this is the case, but at the same time I do not believe that it is necessary for us to find or agree on the name of these works. As I will argue later, there is something else that I think that these works have in common.

'Conceptual dance' or... ?

Jeroen Fabius observes that the term 'conceptual dance' first appeared in the 1990s as a response to choreography's new developments in Western Europe and that, although it is still in use, the term has been rejected by artists and theorists alike as inappropriate (2012). The reason for this, Bojana Cvejič argues, is that it has not been theorised in the performing arts discourses interested in this kind of work and furthermore it is not helpful to the development of the work of the artists to whom it has been attributed and who were not the ones to introduce it (2006).

Nevertheless, a change is observed during the 1990s – the change that Pouillaude referred to as a mutation. In 1993, Jean-Marc Adolphe wrote an article in Ballett International magazine entitled "The beginnings of a "New Wave"". In the article, with reference to Meg Stuart, Caterina Sagna and Vera Mantero, he explains that, although their work still evidences dance technique, it nevertheless deemphasises the centrality of the dancing body, emphasising instead the human body onstage and the 'simultaneity of thinking and physicality' (Adolphe cited in Fabius, 2006, p. 2).

Although the term 'conceptual' is not yet being used in 1993, but rather begins to be used well into the 2000s, Cvejič explains why dance might be associated with conceptual art, while arguing that this association is unconstructive and harmful (2006). The first reason Cvejič provides for the association with conceptual art is the use of the speech act by both. She suggests that, whereas conceptual art in the late 1960s used performativity and the speech act *to question what is art* by declaring it art, in dance, speech acts such as 'this is choreography' are not declarations. She believes that this is the case because declarations such as 'this is choreography' are used *to question the limits of the dance medium*, dominant views of what dance can be and 'the institutional resistance to not only other propositions, but to the form of proposition as such' (Cvejič, 2006). I do not necessarily see the inconsistency Cvejič points out here. Visual artists took what was not widely considered art and named it as such. Dance artists took what was widely not considered choreography (because it did not conform to dance expectations for what choreography is) and named it as such. It seems that both are declarations that aim at questioning how we define disciplines and how we form values around these definitions.

The second reason offered by Cvejič as to why dance might be associated with conceptual art is the self-reflexivity in both 'conceptual art' and 'conceptual dance'. She argues that dance's self-reflexivity has to do more with its materiality and the spectator's 'perceptual experience and interpretation' rather than with a discursive and epistemological self-reflexivity that characterises conceptual art (2006). Dance's self-reflexivity, Cvejič's believes, is about spectatorship and the structures that enable a specific relationship between author-work and spectator. Lastly, Cvejič's claims that although 'conceptual art' and 'conceptual dance' share a

critique against object / commodity status⁴⁵, 'conceptual dance' participates in 'the institution' through collaborations between choreographers and programmers (ibid.), a point that cannot be refuted.

Cvejič provides three reasons why 'conceptual dance' is clearly an inappropriate term. First, the term 'conceptual' would imply the 'withdrawal of the perceptual', when in this work 'the word does not prevail over movement', but investigates 'other materialities of movement and body expressivity' (2006). Cvejič believes that this work 'approaches dance as writing in the Derridean sense, which doesn't and cannot reiterate the writing of a text in the domain of theory' (ibid). Although her elaboration here about different materialities is accurate, I do believe that her argument based on the differentiation between the 'conceptual' and the 'perceptual' becomes problematic because it establishes an unhelpful binary opposition equivalent to the mind-body binary. In fact, it is this Cartesian dualism that I believe continues to be problematic for dance. Although dance points to the importance of the body, struggling against the conventionally accepted superiority of the mind, it sometimes ends up privileging the body over the mind. Dance, the dance act, is both a mental as well as a bodily act: there can be no 'conceptual' act that is not at the same time 'perceptual'.

⁴⁵ André Lepecki supports that '[c]ontemporary European dance poses radical challenges to the choreographic art object precisely at the level of the possibility of its reproduction. Not only does this object not rely on technique...it doesn't even concern itself with making technique the specific signature of the choreographer. Rather, it challenges absolutely the very "saleability" of the dance object by withdrawing quite often from it what should be its distinctive (market) trait: dance. The emergence of stillness as a staple in contemporary European choreography has many causes and implications, but its role as a resistance to the spectacular has to be seen not only as an aesthetic reduction (which would side it with minimalist concerns) but importantly as a political statement in the market value of the dance object – essentially a concern of conceptual art' (2004a, pp. 177-178).

Secondly, Cvejič argues, these practices are not a continuation of conceptual art's project towards the dematerialization of the object by substituting language for movement, for they operate from within the institution market, 'emphasizing a critical use of the theatre dispositif', as we will see Bel doing later in this thesis (2006). Thirdly, due to their heterogeneity, these practices evidence 'a hybridity of different influences, trends, disciplines, media and genres...and an openness of differences, many not only concepts, but conceptualizations of dance beyond Modernism' (ibid.). They therefore cannot be considered an artistic movement under the term 'conceptual dance' (ibid.). This last quote strongly defends Cvejič's point, but also opens up the question as to whether these characteristics of the practices that she refers to are not the same as what is referred to, at least in the UK, still avoiding strict definitions, as 'Live Art'. For example, the Live Art Development Agency offers a page-and-a half long statement about Live Art that matches quite closely what Cvejič describes above. Although it is worth reading it in its entirety, I provide a still quite lengthy excerpt here:

Live Art is a research engine, driven by artists who are working *across forms, contexts and spaces* to open up *new artistic models, new languages for the representation of ideas and new strategies for intervening in the public sphere*. Influenced at one extreme by late 20th century Performance Art methodologies where fine artists, in a rejection of objects and markets, turned to their body as the site and material of their practice, and at the other by enquiries where artists broke the traditions of the circumstance and expectations of theatre, a diverse range of practitioners in the 21st century – *from those working in dance, film and video, to performance writing, socio-political activism and the emerging languages of the digital age* – continue to be excited by the possibilities of the live event. *The term Live Art is not a description of an artform or discipline, but a cultural strategy to include experimental processes and experiential practices that might otherwise be excluded from established curatorial, cultural and critical frameworks. Live Art is a framing device for a catalogue of approaches to the possibilities of liveness by artists who chose to work across, in between, and at the edges of more traditional artistic forms...* To talk about Live Art is to talk about art that invests in ideas of process, presence and experience as much as the production of objects or things; art that wants to test the limits of the possible and the permissible; and art that seeks to be alert and responsive to its contexts, sites and audiences

(Live Art Development Agency, 2014, my emphasis).

The term Live Art seems to be the most appropriate for what Cvejič describes. But again, not naming these works 'dance' perhaps misses the point of their questioning of what dance can be and do. At the same time, calling these works Live Art, in effect places them in a different department in academia, that of Theatre and Performance Studies, which creates yet another problem. Before discussing Cvejič's last two points, I would like to briefly address this here, as through such a conversation different understandings of the role of dance – Bel's economy – are revealed.

Dance departments want to keep their autonomy, which is both a political as well as an economic decision. This is a continuing concern in dance academia as made evident in last year's (June 2013) conversation between Michelle Clayton, Mark Franko, Nadine George-Graves, André Lepecki, Susan Manning, Janice Ross, Rebecca Schneider and Stefanie Miller at Brown University in the US, as part of the Mellon funded initiative Dance Studies in/and the Humanities (Clayton et al., 2013). Albeit referencing more the US academic context, I believe that the concerns expressed are common to the UK dance academia. Susan Manning observed that from a seminar that took place the previous year to this conversation

it became clear that the integration of dance into performance studies has created some tensions in the field. Several of my senior colleagues believe that performance studies has erased or undermined dance-specific methods of movement inquiry. In response to this critique, Rebecca [Schneider] at last year's seminar challenged the group to continue engaging in a performance studies approach, without necessarily living under the rubric or being colonized by the field, in order to examine not just dance as culture, but culture as dance. And I applaud her stance... [O]ne can move between different models and blend parts of different models. Just as scholars can work both inside and outside dance studies, so too can scholars work in radical and integrationist ways (Clayton et al.,

2013, p. 9).

Rebecca Schneider called for the need to think ‘more rigorously about research that allows, always, a both/and – both inside and outside’ (Clayton et al., 2013, p. 9). She argued that dance studies can be done ‘within an interdisciplinary framework’, but that this is ‘difficult institutionally to realize because it’s very hard to institutionalize interdisciplinarity’ (ibid.). However, she expressed the belief that ‘in terms of dance, *interdisciplinarity is not a way out of the discipline: it is a way to describe the complexity of the discipline or “object” of study*’ (Clayton et al., 2013, p. 11, my emphasis).

Mark Franko agreed that the way that we need to ‘position ourselves in order to move the field forward’ is through interdisciplinarity – ‘an attempt to speak to each other’ – which is materialized in the ‘speak[ing] to each other from certain disciplinary formations, but...about an object’ that is shared (Clayton et al., 2013, p.13). In that way there is an ‘expansion of methodological purpose and theoretical outlook’ which ‘has immense potential for all of our thinking, individually and as a group’. He stated that he believes that although this model is difficult, it is possible (ibid.).

André Lepecki emphasised that because of the current ‘attack against the humanities and the arts’ by neoliberal capitalism we should be thinking not only interdisciplinarily, but also ‘strategically and tactically’ (Clayton et al., 2013, p. 17).

How is it that, within our scholarship and artistic practices, we can actually produce something for the humanities that is not under house arrest, and perhaps actually embrace the notion of crisis, as opposed to want or desire not to be in crisis?...*Dance Studies is....never what it is; it’s always what it does. But, I realize, it’s also what’s done to it.* Somebody’s always doing something to Dance Studies. For instance, defunding it, or denying it recognition as an important field of critical research and inquiry

in the academy. And how do we then create strategies of resistance? (Clayton et al., 2013, p. 18, my emphasis).

Lepecki argued that, first, we should ‘think about, how...dance studies can actually contribute to political theory’ (Clayton et al., 2013, p.18). How can we ‘within societies of control and societies of discipline...actually imagine agency? And for me, that’ s the question of the dancer...via for instance the tension “choreography/agency” (ibid.). Extending Hannah Arendt’s thinking about ‘the dancer as the exemplary political subject, because he or she has the courage to take initiative, to initiate (1958 , 207)’, Lepecki emphasised that ‘the political subject is not only the one who acts, but also the one *who speaks*’: how can ‘dance discourses and texts...actually be included within the task of the dancer...accept[ing] language and voice as part of the dancer’s actions and of choreography’ s tools?’ (ibid., my emphasis). Second, with regards to the crisis in the humanities, Lepecki suggested that the museum is ‘an institution that...is emerging as a site in which the humanities and the arts actually could merge, enter into a vivid dialogue in ways that perhaps universities are no longer... too enthusiastic to consider’ (Clayton et al., 2013, p.19). Finally, Lepecki pointed out ‘the political urgency of theory’ for dance studies because theory is ‘essential to subaltern voices and to artistic practices’ (ibid., p. 20). He asked us to consider what ‘what kind of philosophy is being privileged’ right now and urges us to rescue postcolonial theory (ibid., p. 21).

Bringing the conversation to the subject of methodology, Nadine George-Graves argued that, although most ‘marriages’ of dance and theatre departments are happy, ‘[w]e must recognize and maintain rigorous distinctions and distinct modes of inquiry at the same time we interrogate the space between and resist those

feelings of being threatened, which I think is an important challenge' (Clayton et al., 2013, p. 24). In response, Schneider questioned whether dance studies has 'a distinct methodological approach' that it can 'bring to an interdisciplinary table' (ibid., pp. 25-26). Franko suggested that this is the strategy that they assumed in the 1980s: 'infiltrat[ing] the other disciplines' infiltrating their methodologies, while at the same time making them aware that 'they have always already been doing dance studies' (ibid.). Against the claim that dance studies has 'no indigenous, immanent methodology' he expressed the belief that 'that' s precisely, in a way, its strength – that it is phantasmatic, that it doesn' t exist in one place—like bodies themselves' (ibid., p. 26). Susan Manning suggested that 'dance studies can bring an awareness of embodied knowledge, and how to translate that into words, through movement analysis, choreographic analysis, and...frame analysis' (ibid.). Finally, Lepecki suggested that we should continue to work 'in a kind of impurity and errancy in regards to what would be considered "proper" visibility, "proper" modes of description, "proper" methodologies predicated on "objective distance," and of "proper" elements for dance analysis' (ibid.).

While Schneider, Franko and Lepecki agree that interdisciplinarity is the way to move the field forward, George-Graves emphasises that it is important that dance maintains a distinct mode of inquiry. Manning concurs with George-Graves, adding that what dance can bring to the interdisciplinary table is an awareness of embodied knowledge (Clayton et al., 2013). Although this conversation does not directly contribute to my earlier discussion regarding the naming of certain practices as 'conceptual', it contributes something else. It reveals the complicated politics involved in both the naming/categorising of artworks, as well as and because of the often conflicting aims and desires of academic disciplines and

differing views on how a field might move forward – especially when it is under threat. Let us return to Cvejić and the last reasons why she believes that the term ‘conceptual’ is inappropriate for the work in the 1990s.

Cvejić addresses the term ‘concept’ itself. She observes that although until the 1990s one could discuss dance performance by asking what kind of object it is in terms of its materiality, its relation to the body, its technique or style and what it is trying to communicate metaphorically, in the mid-1990s the relevant question became ‘what kind of concept is performed’ or communicated through the performance (2006). (Although I am not advocating for the use of the term ‘conceptual’, this point can actually make the argument *for* using the term). Cvejić argues that this prevented the work’s definition and categorization via the aesthetic properties that constituted the work. Providing the work of Jérôme Bel, Vera Mantero and Xavier Le Roy as examples, she notes that, although the work appears to have resemblances with regards to the clarity of procedures, these artists understand very differently what the ‘concept’ is for every work. The choreographers of the 1990s consider choreography the object of the work, a concept to be questioned, expanded and modified, and not already defined (as composition, as organised bodily movement in time and space) and use new tools (semiotics, language theory, visual arts, popular culture, understandings of the spectacle in performance and society etc.) in the making of their work, echoing in some ways the preceding conversation on interdisciplinarity. For Cvejić, these choreographers understand ‘writing’ dance not only as movement, action and thought, but also as the assumptions, values and ideas upon which these are based (ibid.).

Cvejič concludes that 'conceptual dance' is an inappropriate term altogether because the practices do not 'dematerialize the concept from its object' (2006). I would argue that, firstly, concepts in art never stay as mere concepts; they are manifested materially either as an object, an action or as a performance. Secondly, what Cvejič, as I understand her, is saying with the phrase 'do not dematerialize the concept from its object' sounds a lot like the concept of performativity. The concept is performed in the object it creates. The concept is enacted in the dance. Is this not what 'conceptual art' does also? The difference is that in dance this is done with 'dance stuff', with dance material, whether that is dance steps, technique, thinking or critique.

Ramsay Burt and André Lepecki are in agreement with Cvejič about the inappropriateness of the term. Burt argues that the term 'conceptual' prioritises a cerebral relationship to and in the making and viewing of the work, as well as an implication that the work consists simply in the execution of the choreographer's ideas by the dancers (Burt cited in Fabius, 2012, pp. 1-2). Burt here establishes, like Cvejič, a binary opposition: the 'conceptual' versus the 'perceptual' or the 'cerebral' versus the 'visceral' or 'body-based', privileging implicitly the body over the mind. Lepecki points to the importance of not naming the project undertaken by these practitioners at all (Lepecki cited in Fabius, 2006, p. 2). Labelling the project would perhaps defeat the project itself, for labels close down meaning and the potential of what they refer to.

A last point Cvejič makes that is worth considering, especially in relation to Pouillaude's observations offered earlier in this text, concerns the relation of the dance in the 1960s and dance in 1990s. Cvejič disagrees with Pouillaude's

assertion that the 1990s mutation was a repetition and adjustment of the mutation of dance in the 1960s, as well with as other articulations that the former (1990s dance) is a result of the influence of the latter (1960s dance), making instead a similar argument to the one I offered earlier. She argues that, it is a matter of transformation – not repetition – for the fact that many of the threads of the *content* of the emerging new concept of dance in the 1990s already existed in the 1960s, does not also make the *concept* of dance in the 1990s the same or a continuation of the one in 1960s where dance was only questioned as a medium (Cvejič, 2006).

There is certainly something in the work that the practices that emerge in the 1990s have in common. Perhaps it is what Una Bauer referred to as ‘the movement of embodied thought which refuses to fix itself in particular recognizable types of oppositional discourses, or oppositional response structures’ in her writing about Jérôme Bel’s work (2008, p. 40). Perhaps what we are identifying as common is the rigour of the thinking in producing the work which is influenced by and draws on different theories and disciplines – not necessarily common amongst the artists – and is then embodied in the work, not to demonstrate the theory as if it was a text, but as a thought process that influences the making. Or perhaps what joins these artists is what Austrian dance critic Helmut Ploebst observed in his book *No Wind No Word* about and with Emio Greco PC, João Fiadeiro, Vera Mantero, Boris Charmatz, Jérôme Bel, Xavier Le Roy, Raimund Hoghe, Maria La Ribot and Benoît Lachambre: that these artists ‘launch political discourses: in the analysis, staging and contextual placement of the body, in the thematic location of their subject, in the texture of their work or in various co-operative methods, and even in economic strategies’ (2001, p. 265).

I suggest a reframing. Although we do not need a name for these practices to exist, develop and further the dance field, I suggest that it is a *specific economy* that joins these artists 'together': an economy of theoretical influences, of political struggles and strategies and of a shared understanding of the role of their work in the larger political and cultural economy. A belief that dance can do more, that it should remain an open field for continuous questioning of itself and the systems in which it is embedded.

Manifesto for an European Performance Policy

This shared economy, particularly with regards to the political struggles and strategies, but also the shared understanding of the role of the work in the larger political and cultural economy and the belief that the art form should question itself and the systems in which it is embedded, is made evident by the *Manifesto for an European Performance Policy*. In 2001, Jérôme Bel, Maria La Ribot, Xavier Le Roy and Christophe Wavelet invited a group of European artists to jointly discuss their increasing concerns as contemporary artists and citizens who 'actively take part in the process of decision-making in terms of cultural policies' and are concerned with their ability for independent decision making about their means of producing work (*Freie Theatre*, 2008). Hosted by the Tanzquartier Wien in Vienna, this meeting aimed at articulating 'their conception of a meaningful artistic policy for the now united Europe' and expressed their demand for 'transparency in policy and call for such policy to address artists' extremely varied forms of production today' (ibid). The meeting resulted in the writing of the 'Manifesto for an European Performance Policy' in 2002 (*Manifesto: to the European Commission and its*

Cultural and Political Representatives - Dance, 2 July 2002), which articulated a number of demands and made a series of proposals. Before submitting to the European Commission and its Cultural and Political Representatives, the Manifesto invited signatures of support (*Freie Theatre*, 2008). The demands of the Manifesto were the following:

‘We want the European Community to:

- resource artists as much as art,
- invest in the ongoing needs and long-term growth of independent performers,
- actively support artists in research, development and in the ongoing process of their practices, in equal measure to the generation and placement of new works
- recognise and enhance the relationships between and across innovative contemporary practices
- facilitate strategies for cross-disciplinary dialogues, collaborations and funding initiatives
- support new strategies for increasing audience awareness and appreciation,
- demonstrate a genuine commitment to innovation, risk and hybridity,
- actively develop, recognise and support a more important number of active, flexible and inventive artistic structures and infrastructures
- and to engage in a dialogue, set up the conditions for a new debate regarding these questions’ (Bel et al., 2002).

They also acknowledged the variety of their work and names attached to it:

Our practices can be described by a range of terminology, depending on the different cultural contexts in which we operate. Our practices can be called: ‘performance art’, ‘live art’, ‘happenings’, ‘events’, ‘body art’, ‘contemporary dance/ theatre’, ‘experimental dance’, ‘new dance’, ‘multimedia performance’, ‘site specific’, ‘body installation’, ‘physical theatre’, ‘laboratory’, ‘conceptual dance’, ‘independence’, ‘postcolonial dance / performance’, ‘street dance’, ‘urban dance’, ‘dance theatre’, ‘dance performance’ - to name but a few ...
(Bel et al., 2002).

What joins these artists, then, is neither aesthetics nor the interrogation of dance as a medium, but an understanding of the importance of the politics and the role of the economy of their work in larger economies and how they are embedded in it, and that dance should remain an open field for continuous questioning of itself and the systems in which it is embedded.

The preceding has described the economy in which Jérôme Bel works. It is one that is contested and ill-defined, where financial, institutional and ideological interests interact as the 'field' of 'contemporary' dance. It also offered the views of theorists, artists and reviewers who discuss Bel's work on grounds of, among others, the formation of subjectivity through his use of the body, his use of systems, repetition, stillness and language. In Chapter 4, I look at Bel's work from a different perspective: I examine his work through the lens of economy (the reasons for which I will offer in due time), offering a discussion on the economies of thought, interaction and encounter Bel's work produces through the relations the work creates within itself and with the economies of contemporary dance and neoliberal capitalism in which it is embedded.

CHAPTER 4

The Jérôme Bel Economy – *Veronique Doisneau & The Show Must Go On*

In this chapter, I suggest that Bel's work and the relations it produces are best read through the lens of economy, for the term reveals most strikingly how elements in the work are layered (the work's economy of time, representation, gesture, movement and relations), the work's production of economies of thought, interaction and encounter, but also how the work is complicit, resists or reveals the economies in which it is embedded: the theatre economy (as the space of its presentation), the contested and ill-defined contemporary dance economy discussed in the previous chapter and neoliberal capitalism. I suggest that from his first work to his most recent, Bel takes on board the smallest economy – that of the work's construction – and with every work he continues to expand his consideration of economy to larger circles. Although he does this in a way with every work (for example, tension with the dance economy is always created by the fact that in most of his works he does not use recognisable dance movement), the consideration of a larger economy becomes more explicit with every new performance, creating what I consider to be an appearance of concentric circles around the idea of economy. In Bel's first works – *Nom donne par l'auteur* (1994), *Jérôme Bel* (1995), *Shirtology* (1997), *The Last Performance* (1998), *Xavier Le Roy* (2000), *The Show Must Go On* (2001) – the subject of the work is the theatre as a meaning-making mechanism: theatre's conventions, how meaning is produced in this space, the function of spectacle and representation and understandings of the role of the author and spectator. I refer to the subject in these works as the theatre economy and suggest that these concerns are best illustrated with *The Show Must Go On*. From *Veronique Doisneau* (2004) on – *Pichet Klunchun and Myself* (2005),

Isabel Torres (2005), *Lutz Förster* (2009), *Cédric Andrieux* (2009), *3Abschied* (2010), *Disabled Theater* (2012) – Bel’s subject shifts. The subject of his work becomes the Subjects that occupy the theatre space in the economy of dance. And for this he selects specific subjects: the ballerina, the contemporary dancer, the non-western dancer, the contemporary dance collaborator, the disabled dancer. In the pages that follow, I propose that he interrogates this – the Subjects that occupy the theatre space in the economy of dance – best with *Veronique Doisneau*. In both cases –that is, in Bel’s examination of both the theatre economy as well as the individual Subjects represented and who are representative of different dance economies – his consideration of what is and can be named dance is tested, and furthermore the spectator and her understanding of what she sees and the values she brings with her is highly important.⁴⁶

This chapter is comprised of three parts: in the first, I use *Veronique Doisneau* (2004) to discuss the Subject that occupies the theatre – in this case Veronique – in relation to the economy of dance. I examine the economy of relations within the work and its relation to its context: the specific theatre, city and the contemporary dance and ballet economies. I argue that the work’s importance lies in the affect it produces, which has the potential to affect further action and therefore effect change in the dance economy. Although *Veronique Doisneau* was created after *The Show Must Go On*, I discuss this work first, because its concerns are more relevant to our preceding conversation about the contemporary dance economy. The examination of *Veronique Doisneau*, as well as the making and presentation of my work *Martyro* (‘Inter-Vention’ 4), which is located within this chapter, point to how

⁴⁶ This is perhaps most evident in *Pichet Klunchun and Myself*, for the Western understanding of dance and of the ‘other’ more broadly is brought to the surface.

an artwork can critique the economy/space of its presentation, but also to the importance of affect as a way to empower bodies and affect further action. I have chosen to situate *Martyro* ('Inter-Vention' 4) within this chapter (and before the analysis of *Veronique*) in order to draw attention to the influence of *Martyro*'s making and presentation on my reading of *Veronique Doisneau*.

The second part of this chapter looks at Bel's *The Show Must Go On* (2001) in relation to its subject: the theatre as a space and meaning-production mechanism. I look at the work's internal economy and its relation to the theatre economy. I examine the sociality of the work through the economy of relations it produces and argue that the work's potential emerges from its own construction and consequent sociality, which afford the creation of what Gilbert (2014) refers to as 'spaces of decision', 'affect' and 'creative possibility'.

In the third part, I conclude by examining how Bel, through the economy of relations within his work and the work's relation to the economies in which it is embedded, 'supports "the other"'. I argue that he does so through the manner he produces the social, which in turn produces ethical encounters. Finally, through a comparison of the space of the theatre to that of the museum, I argue that Bel's work also reveals that the theatre, when critiqued in the manner of Bel, is an important place of presentation in our contemporary moment due its specific conditions of time and space. Let us begin with *Martyro* ('Inter-Vention' 4).⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Parts of this chapter were first published in an article with *Performance Research* (Paramana, Katerina. 2015. 'Re-turning to *The Show*: Repetition and the Construction of Spaces of Decision, Affect and Creative Possibility', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 20(5), 116-124. Accessible at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13528165.2015.1095985>).

'INTER-VENTION' 4

Martyro (2011), Toynebee Studios, 'Trashing Performance', Performance Matters Symposium

1. The Economies of 'Martyro'

Both *Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality – A Lecture-Performance* ('Inter-Vention' 2) and *Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?* ('Inter-Vention' 2) were concerned with the systems of the works' construction as well as with the systems and economies in which the works were embedded (i.e. the *Commin(icat)ion of Crisis* Symposium in the case of *Muddle Muddle*, the *Performance Matters* Symposium's theme 'Potentials of Performance' in the case of *Talking with Strangers*, and, in both cases, the economic and social crisis). *Martyro* (2011) was specifically concerned with the value and ideological systems that were the context of its presentation and on which context the work absolutely depended for its making and reading. I considered this context – the economy of the work's presentation – to be composed of three concentric circles (a useful way for me throughout this thesis of thinking about the economies of artworks): the *Performance Matters* research project (the outer circle), the theme of *Performance Matters'* second year 'Trashing Performance' (the second circle) and, the platform in which *Martyro* was to be presented, the 'Trash Salon: How to do things with waste?' (the inner circle).

Let us remind ourselves what *Performance Matters*, the project in which I participated as an associate researcher, was and at what it aimed. The project, as further elaborated in the discussion of *Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?*, was a creative research project that investigated 'the contemporary values

associated with performance' in the contemporary moment and set out to 'explore the interface between performance theory and practice, as well as differing approaches to performance within higher education institutions and the public sector' (*Performance Matters*, 2009-2012).

The *Performance Matters* project itself, then, was concerned with questioning the construction of value in relation to performance in our contemporary moment and its potential to affect what matters and how it matters. In the yearly symposia, lectures, dialogues and performances by theorists and artists addressed these concerns by commenting on them explicitly or implicitly through their choice of words, images and actions whether on a page or a stage, and through the manner in which they situated them within specific existing discourses and economies. The symposia revealed what sorts of things people talk about, are concerned with, and considered important in the economy of the academy: what ideas and values they hold and privilege, and for what kind of academy they hope.

'Trashing Performance'– the second concentric circle of the context of *Martyro's* creation and presentation – was specifically concerned with an exploration of 'marginal and degraded performance practices...in order to produce critical and cultural innovations through non-institutional manifestations and informal disseminations' (*Performance Matters*, 2010-2011). In a text that contextualised and elaborated on the year's theme, the curators observed that:

[p]erformance has long suffered a history of critical trashings. As Jonas Barish argues in his magisterial study from 1981 *The Antitheatrical Prejudice*, 'theatre' has long been approached in various world cultures as a sign of value-less activity, whilst performance art in the west has, up until very recently, suffered critical and institutional neglect as 'the runt of

the litter of contemporary art' (Phelan, *Unmarked*). But to what degree have things changed with the recent embrace of performance in the institutions of contemporary culture? (*Performance Matters*, 2010-2011).

'Trashing Performance', then, observing that certain forms of performance and Live Art have recently been embraced by 'institutions of contemporary culture', was interested in questioning a) whether and which performance forms are still neglected, are still 'trashed' critically and therefore institutionally; b) how artists today engage with trashing strategies by working in modes or genres considered unworthy of critical acclaim and/or outside the mainstream; c) what the 'gendered, racialised, sexualised and classed' associations, and ethical and political implications, of the term 'trashy' itself are; and d) what potential might emerge from engaging with trashy strategies for the 'production of the democratic public sphere' (*Performance Matters*, 2010-2011).

Finally, 'Trash Salon: How to do things with waste?', the inner concentric circle of *Martyro's* context, was to present work by the *Performance Matters'* associate researchers, who shared

their 'wasted works.' At the *Trash Salon*, presentations, papers and performances and various show-and-tell formats explored and put to question those ideas, works, and projects that for various reasons were unfinished, refused, rejected, thrown out, and interrupted: the sketch in the notebook, the unsuccessful project proposal, the unaccomplished element, the event that was cancelled. What happens to these wasted works and ideas, and what are their potentials, if any? Does showing wasted work imply salvaging it from the trash heap? Is recuperating and transforming waste enough? Or might we think about the *ways* we reflect upon, present and perform these wasted works? (*Performance Matters*, 2010-2011).

The *Trash Salon*, although reflecting the concerns of the symposium's theme, articulated them in more ecological terms, with evaluation of the reasons for a 'wasted' or 'trashed' work only coming at the end of this articulation.

On Taste and 'Trashing' in the Academy

A response to the call of the symposium and to that of the *Trash Salon* necessitated an understanding of the trash culture and what it itself rejects. Bourdieu argues that 'tastes are perhaps first and foremost distastes, disgust provoked by horror or visceral intolerance of the tastes of others' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 57). He believes that '[i]t is no accident that when they have to be justified, they are asserted negatively, by the refusal of other tastes' (ibid.). The 'trash' culture is a response to the general understanding of what is 'tasteful' and 'appropriate', what is valued as 'good' or 'worthy'. To understand what might be at stake in 'Trashing Performance', it is helpful to consider Sconce's account of trash cinema.

According to Sconce, 'trash' cinema was an 'articulate cinematic subculture, one organized around what are among the most critically disreputable films in cinematic history' and, along with publications on these films, it is termed 'paracinema' (Sconce, 1995, p. 372). 'Paracinema' includes subgenres such as "'badfilm", splatterpunk, "mondo" films, sword and sandal epics, Elvis flicks, governmental hygiene films, Japanese monster movies [and] beach-party musicals' (ibid.). Sconce observes that 'paracinema' is 'less a distinct group of films than a particular *reading protocol*, a counter-aesthetic turned subcultural sensibility devoted to all manner of cultural detritus' (ibid., my emphasis). It 'valorize[s] all forms of cinematic "trash", whether such films have been either explicitly rejected or simply ignored by legitimate film culture' (ibid.). Sconce observes that although

paracinematic taste may have its roots in the world of 'low-brow' fan culture...the paracinematic sensibility has...recently begun to infiltrate the avant garde, the academy, and even the mass culture on which paracinema's ironic reading strategies originally preyed...Recently, the trash aesthetic has even made inroads into mainstream popular taste (Sconce, 1995, p. 373).

It is important to note that since Sconce's writing in 1995 there has not been considerable progress in the academy's relation to 'trash' culture. In addition, although both the paracinematic sensibility and the 'camp' aesthetic are 'highly ironic' and 'infatuated with the artifice and excess of obsolescent cinema', paracinematic cinema's difference lies in 'its aspiration to the status of "counter-cinema"' (Sconce, 1995, p. 374); to 'promote an alternative vision of cinematic "art"' (ibid.). Sconce suggests that, where '[c]amp was an aesthetic of ironic colonization and cohabitation', paracinema is 'an aesthetic of vocal confrontation' (ibid.). He also argues that the consumers of paracinema have a similar level of sophistication with that of its producers:

[T]he discourses characteristically employed by paracinematic culture in its valorization of 'low-brow' artefacts indicate that [its] audience, like the film elite (academics, aesthetes, critics), is particularly rich with 'cultural capital' and thus possesses a level of textual/critical sophistication similar to the cineastes they construct as their nemesis (Sconce, 1995, p. 375).

Sconce also believes that, much 'like the academy and the popular press', the paracinematic community 'embodies primarily a white, male, middle-class, and "educated" perspective of cinema' (Sconce, 1995, p. 375). However, he emphasises that this does not mean that the academics and students of paracinematic cinema are embraced in the academy; they are still 'exiles' from its 'legitimizing functions' (ibid., p. 379). Sconce argues that these academics and students consider 'trash culture as a site of "refuge and revenge"' (ibid) and struggle "'to produc[e] another market with its consecrating agencies...capable of challenging the pretension of the educational system to impose the principles of evaluation of competencies and manners which reign in the scholastic market'" (Bourdieu cited in Sconce, 1995, p. 379).

The aesthetics of paracinema are also addressed by Sconce. He argues that paracinema is overall characterised by 'an aesthetic of excess', which 'represents an explicitly political challenge to reigning aesthete discourses in the academy' (1995, p. 380). However, Hawkins and Muecke add that the 'aesthetization of waste' is also something else: 'an economic move, an attempt to invert value, to recuperate the negative' (2003, p. xi). They argue that

[w]aste has a 'generative dynamic in the destruction and formation of value'....Loss, waste and the unproductive are antieconomic. They disturb the logic of 'general positivity' that, Smith argues, is what defines an economy: the production of positive value, gain, or benefit (Hawkins and Muecke, 2003, pp. xi-xii).

They also believe that 'changing relations to waste mean changing relations to self' (Hawkins and Muecke, 2003, p. xiv) and Hawkins emphasises that 'what we want to get rid of tells us who we are...but what we want to get rid of also *makes* us who we are' (Hawkins, 2006, p. 2).

What 'paracinema' is to cinema, 'trash performance' is to performance: an aesthetic of excess that has its roots in 'low-brow' culture (e.g. cabaret, club and popular scene) but has entered the academy, although it still functions at its edges. It is a rejection of 'high-brow' culture and avant-gardism. It is also highly ironic: like 'camp' performance, but confrontational like 'paracinema', desiring to challenge pretensions of 'tastefulness' and 'appropriateness'. It is aspirational with regards to its status in the academy, but also an economic and political move seeking to question what is considered 'waste' and the manner in which taste and value are constructed.

Furthermore, as Sconce observes with 'paracinema' (1995, p. 372), trash performance has a similar *reading protocol* referred to as 'queer'. Drawing on

1960s poststructuralist thought, 'queering' is an act of deconstruction, which emerges in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the gay community and is also addressed by Judith Butler's work on performativity (1993). In the context of performance studies, 'queering' is a reading strategy and practice – 'queer' does not (only) refer to an identity. Unlike the verb 'to deconstruct', which implies a movement of opening out, of disassembling, 'to queer' also implies a movement of twisting the object of analysis, turning it on its head, looking under and above it and from all angles, which I often find a more useful act.

With these three concentric circles in mind, the questions I asked in creating and presenting *Martyro* were the following:

- How do I address these three contexts critically, whilst critiquing my own ideas and values?
- Which work that I have rejected – according to the 'Trash Salon' – can be materialised and presented that also comments on the idea of 'trash' (the symposium's theme) and considers the cultural value of performance in the contemporary world (the concern of the *Performance Matters* project)?
- How can the work I choose to present, on the one hand, not be characterised by trash aesthetics (an aesthetic of excess) therefore creating a tension with the symposium's theme, but, on the other hand, use *queer strategies*? That is, how can the work queer (twist, question, turn on its head, critically engage with) the context of the symposium's theme 'trashing performance', questioning what this taste culture itself rejects/trashes and force an act of nuancing of what 'trash' is and therefore how a 'democratic public sphere' might be constituted?

2. The work

In response to these questions with regards to the three contexts of presentation, I created a performance-installation that was presented in a corner of the Court Room Studio in Toynbee Studios. This was a work I had never completed, having ‘wasted’/trashed/rejected it for several years as too personal/private.

The installation part of the work consisted of a few objects: a ‘girly’ wardrobe that appeared fragile/flimsy and had no doors that I positioned in a corner of the room. Within the wardrobe, one could see a pair of black men’s shoes sitting on the wardrobe’s shelf, a black men’s dress shirt hanging on its rack and a text by Pablo Neruda hanging on the inside back wall of the wardrobe. The poem read: ‘If I die, survive me with such sheer force / that you waken the furies of the pallid and the cold; / from south to south lift your indelible eyes,/ from sun to sun dream through your singing mouth. / I don’t want your laughter or your steps to waver; / I don’t want my heritage of joy to die; / don’t call up my person. I am absent. / Live in my absence as if in a house. / Absence is a house so vast / that inside you will pass through its walls / and hang pictures on the air. / Absence is a house so transparent / that I, lifeless, will see you, living, / and if you suffer, I will die again’. Finally, a text that offered the definition and noun form of the verb *martyro* – the work’s title – and a quote by Gay Hawkins hung on the wall beside the wardrobe. This text read:

Martyro
by Katerina Paramana

μαρτυρώ (v.) (martyro)

1. betray, denounce, give away, grass, grass on
(*colloquial;British*),
inform against, rat, report, sell down the river, shit, shop,
sneak on, snitch, snitch on (*colloquial*), squeal (*colloquial*),
stag, tell on (*colloquial*)

2. attest, bear witness, certify, communicate, demonstrate,
denote, depose, evidence, give, give-away, manifest, prove,
reveal, show, suffer, testify

μάρτυρας (*n.*) (*martyras*) [plural: *martyres*]
deponent, deposer, informant, informer, martyr, sufferer,
testifier, witness, witnesser

‘[W] hat we want to get rid of tells as who we are...but what we
want to get rid of also *makes* us who we are’ (Gay Hawkins,
Ethics of waste: How we relate to rubbish 2006, p. 2).

The performance section of the work lasted about fifteen minutes. It involved myself being seen lying naked, in foetal position, inside the wardrobe, to the sound of an excerpt of Rezso Seress’s ‘The Hungarian Suicide Song - Gloomy Sunday’, sung in Hungarian⁴⁸ and repeated three times; then extremely slowly turning my upper body towards the audience by initiating movement from my shoulder, extending my arm out, revealing live aloe vera plants extending from each of my armpits, then slowly standing, walking, looking at the audience and exiting the room.

Although it seems necessary that the information following in this paragraph be revealed to you, the reader, because you will not experience the work, none of this information was revealed to the spectators – they had to deal with the gaps of the work and were asked to piece together a narrative out of the elements revealed to them: what they saw, the textual parts of the installation that they read, the sound they heard and how they were affected by the dramaturgy of the work. They were asked to be ‘martyres’ to my act of ‘martyro’. The work, then, was about / the loss / of my previous partner / of five-years / to cancer / within three months time from his first symptom of illness / twenty days after his – Johns Hopkins Hospital – doctors were able to diagnose the type of cancer invading his body in order to

⁴⁸ See *Appendix 3* for the sound used in this work and the English translation of the lyrics.

appropriately treat him. / I administered chemotherapy – subcutaneous injections – at home. / This was in 2005 / in the US / far from Greece./ I was twenty-three years old/ He was thirty-three. Perhaps in some similar manner that these inappropriately used dashes create a certain gap in the reading of this text, this experience created several gaps for me. That is what loss and trauma do: they interrupt the individual's ability to produce narrative.

Despite the fact that this loss has changed me in many ways, I did not want the work to be 'emotional'. I created a minimalist work that was *affective*, although emotion was kept at bay; no excess of any kind was involved in the work. The images created within it – the aloe vera under my arms, which was perhaps the only evidence of any kind of excess – were from a dream I had months before my partner even felt ill. In the dream, I was simply sitting on the sofa reading, when the plants suddenly sprout out and down from my armpits pushing my arms outwards, producing at the same time a foul smell. The image created in *Martyro* both draws from this dream and at the same time considers the healing property of aloe vera.



Photo by Christa Holka.



Photo by Christa Holka.



Photo by Christa Holka.



Photo by Christa Holka.



Photo by Christa Holka.



Photo by Christa Holka.

3. Reflections on the Work

By materializing and presenting this work I was revealing and re-examining the ideas I had rejected due to the value I had placed on them, while at the same time questioning the aesthetics suggested by trash performance. In many ways, this can be considered both a trash performance in terms of the manner it dealt with waste/rejection and an anti-trash performance in terms of its aesthetics and the manner it dealt with affect. And yet, at the same time, due to the context of presentation of works that have been 'trashed', the work can be thought to be 'trashing' performance works that deal with identity politics, queering the symposium's theme. I will elaborate on this shortly.

I spoke with many spectators and *Performance Matters* researchers, as well as the curators of the project about the work. Many liked its slowness. Two artist-scholars that approached me after the performance commented on the work's 'beautiful images' and that the work 'looked fragile and felt like an offering of something fragile...like it needed to be slow and careful because (since it seemed so important) it would otherwise explode...very carefully constructed, very specific movements'. A fellow associate researcher read the images of my hair and aloe roots as waste products/body waste'. Another artist said that the work reminded her of La Ribot's in regards to how the naked body became neutral through the performance. An academic and artist commented on the creation of a 'strange, peculiar environment', a 'delicate unfolding' and expressed that the work gave him the 'sense of absolute selection of materials' and 'of the unexplained'. He considered the work enigmatic, 'an exit' of a figure. However, the comment that pertains most to this conversation about value, wasting and trashing, was that made by a writer and art historian after a

comment I made on my work at the panel discussion following the performances of the *Trash Salon*. She was surprised by my comment that this was not a work that I would normally present. She expressed a disappointment of some kind in my rejection of such a 'beautiful' or 'powerful' work (memory fails me here as to her exact characterization). At the time I did not articulate the ways that the work engaged with all the contexts of its presentation, nor communicated clearly the way it dealt with the concept of 'trash'. I hope I do so here.

With this work I wanted to nuance and press on terms that are privileged and their considered efficacy: 'affect' versus 'emotion' and 'identity politics' versus 'larger politics'. I wanted to evoke affect, but not emotion, for I considered affect more open than emotion, which can be immobilising. Affect, encourages an act, an effort to identify the situation and what causes the affect before one is able to identify how he or she feels about it; before one associates an emotion with it. It hands agency over to the spectator instead of demonstrating an emotion.⁴⁹

In addition, by presenting the work as something that I had rejected, I suggested a rethinking of what is more urgent in the contemporary moment: that although identity politics is an important issue, what I consider pressing in a moment when democracy across Europe is failing is the making of work that deals with larger politics, with the needs of our economies in the specific historical moment; work that deals with the production of the social and addresses and questions the larger economy in which it is embedded. I suggested, then, a re-prioritisation of what I

⁴⁹ In *The Work of Dance* (2002), Mark Franko observes that 1930s left-wing critics believed that performers should be exhibiting emotion; emotion, not affect, was considered a politically radical quality (pp. 51-58).

thought needs to be more urgently addressed through performance in the contemporary moment for – what the year’s theme referred as – ‘the production of a democratic public sphere’ (*Performance Matters*, 2010-2011).

Lauren Berlant, in her talk at the symposium, also urged an act of nuancing of terms important to the symposium such as ‘trash’, ‘emotion’, ‘excess’ and ‘popular’. She argued that we should not *presume* a relationship between trashing something and knowing that it is trash or feeling something and knowing what it is, that popular is not always loud and tough, and that we do not have one emotion at a time. As I attempted to gesture towards with *Martyro*, it is important that the perceived radicality of an act of trashing be questioned, not so that it is rejected, but in order to make it specific and therefore an act that can potentiate change. Berlant proposed that we know that we are in a historical moment when time feels out of joint, because we feel that the conditions of the reproduction of life are threatened (*Performance Matters*, 2011). It seems that we are indeed in a historical moment, which requires a rethinking of our strategies for change.

Martyro made clear for me how context – the economy in which a work is presented and its relation to it – can crucially affect a work’s reception and perceived efficacy, and how a work can comment, be complicit with, or resist and create tension with that economy. My writing on Bel’s *Veronique Doisneau*, a contemporary dance work in its composition created to critique the ballet economy, reflects and addresses the questions that arose from the making and experience of presenting *Martyro* at the *Performance Matters* ‘Trash Salon’: questions about the production of affect and its effects; questions about the

potency of the context of a work's presentation; and questions about the politics of the body and its 'suffering' in the view of others.

1. *Veronique Doisneau*
(Palais Garnier, Opéra National de Paris, 2005)

Veronique Doisneau was first presented at the Palais Garnier of the Opéra National de Paris in 2004 and toured Europe in 2005. It disappears from Bel's live presentation repertory in December 2005, having being presented for the second and last time at the Palais Garnier in October of that year. It reappears in 2007 only as a film, which is still presented internationally to this day. It is the 2005 film version at the Palais Garnier that I would like to discuss here, as it provides a window into the performance in the site for and due to which it was originally constructed⁵⁰ and with which it creates the most tension. This allows me best to examine the economies in which the work is embedded and the economy of relations that it produces. As I will also do with *The Show*, I first offer a description of the work in which I reflect on aspects that I find important and pertinent to this chapter's discussion, such as the economy of ballet and that of the work's presentation space. I then discuss the relations that the work produces and their potential.

'The question never came up'

As the film starts, we hear Doisneau humming the music of a ballet. I do not recognise which one it is. Her humming has a soothing quality, like a mother putting her baby to sleep. But at the same time, the rustiness in her voice indicates fatigue; as if she has sung this song already a few too many times and 'Hypnos', the

⁵⁰ In a conversation with Daniel Buren, Jérôme Bel explains that the piece 'came to [him] thanks to [Buren's] idea of art, to this history of "on site", of working with the context. For [him], dance is just a tool, just like [Buren] use[s] stripes in [his] work' (Bel and Buren, 2008).

Greek figure of sleep that comes and puts babies to sleep, has still not heard her calling for him.

While we are hearing the humming, we see images from the awe inspiring Paris National Opera at night time. We see the word 'Choreographie' sculpted under the arch of the building and immediately below it the word 'Director' appears as part of the titles of the film. I doubt that this was coincidental – Bel is a master at directing attention. Even if one does not know much about this building, it is clear from its architecture that it is important and that it has a long history⁵¹; that it is an institution where important performances, performances that are considered 'of value', are presented.

The Palais Garnier and the Opera Bastille merged to form the Opéra de Paris in 1990, which in turn became the Opéra National de Paris in 1994. The renaming reveals the intention of the Opera 'to extend its scope beyond the confines of the capital' (Opera National de Paris, 2013).

The main façade of the Opera was completely renovated in 2000, bringing back to the surface 'the original rich colours and golden statue-work' (Opera National de Paris, 2013). The famous double stairway Grand Staircase of the Palais Garnier, 'itself a theatre where, in years gone by, the crinolines of fashionable society ladies would brush', is built with different coloured marbles and leads to the foyers and the different levels of the theatre (ibid.).

It is within the Palais Garnier that the Paris Opera Ballet is housed. The Paris Opera Ballet company has a reputation as one of the best companies in the world: it is the

⁵¹ For the history of the building see Opera National de Paris, 2013.

youngest (the average age of dancers is 25) and has the most extensive repertoire, staging locally and internationally 180 performances ranging from romantic and classical ballet to contemporary work every season. It consists of 154 dancers, 18 étoiles and 14 premiers danseurs who joined the corps de ballet through a competitive entrance exam between the age of sixteen and twenty and retire at age 42. This annual exam allows dancers 'to move up the echelons of the hierarchy: quadrille, coryphée, sujet, premier danseur' (Opera National de Paris, 2013). The étoiles are appointed by the Director of the Opera on the basis of recommendations made by the Company Director. The company's strict hierarchy involves the Company Director, assisted by an Administrator, a Ballet Master directly associated with the Company Director, two ballet masters, four assistant ballet masters, a stage manager, five assistant stage managers and six teachers who run daily lessons every morning due to afternoon or evening rehearsals (ibid.).

Back to the humming. Despite the images of the Palais Garnier that we see, Véronique's humming tells us that tonight's performance – this story, this ballet – will be different from all of those we have seen or heard about; it will be coloured by the sound of her humming. We see images of the grandiose staircase and of audience members entering. Despite the formality of the building and its décor, they are dressed casually. Art-seeing is not an experience reserved only for special nights in expensive clothes, but an everyday experience for everyone. It is indeed funded by everyone, by the taxes of the citizens. And so is all of Bel's work (Bel and Wood, 2013).

We are now taken inside the theatre. We see its gold décor and its red and golden curtain. We hear the orchestra warming-up in the pit. The house lights go out. The theatre curtain goes up. A floodlight covers the whole of the space giving it an informal, workspace feel. A slim and slender figure enters diagonally from upstage right and walks down centre. She is wearing pointe shoes, black rehearsal trousers and a white dancer upper-torso-covering shirt conceals her pink leotard underneath. She is holding a white tutu, a pair of ballet slippers and a water bottle. She is wearing no dance make-up, barely any make-up at all. She is wearing a headset microphone though. Ballet-goer expectations failed so far: natural lighting, no music, single dancer onstage with no costume or make-up, wearing a mic, indicating that the ballerina will speak. And in fact this is how the performance begins.

She greets us with a 'Good evening'. She looks at the audience in the whole of the theatre – the boxes, the upper circles, the stalls – and starts sharing personal information reminiscent of those shared on a chalkboard by the performers in Bel's work *Jérôme Bel*. She announces her name, that she is married with two children six and twelve years old, that she herself is 42 years old, that she will be retiring in eight days and therefore that this performance will be her last at the Paris National Opera. Looking up to the upper circles, she lets them know that if they cannot see her well, people say that she resembles the French actress Isabelle Huppert. The ones that could afford less expensive seats are acknowledged – an effort is made to provide an equal experience. She looks up again, takes a few steps back towards centre stage. An intimate relationship is already established with the viewer. She physically reaches out as much as possible to the spectators, looks at

them, introduces herself and shares personal information. The tone and type of this exchange has been established.

Having taken centre stage, speaking slowly and calmly, she explains that when she was twenty years old she had to undergo a spine surgery which resulted in the removal of an entire damaged vertebrae and no expectation of her dancing again. In spite of this, she continued to dance and is a 'subject' in the Paris Opera Ballet. In its hierarchy, a 'subject' is the one that can dance both 'Corps de Ballet' and soloist roles. She explains that she earns €3,600 / month and that she never became an étoile, because 'the question never came up'. Bitterness, disappointment and profound sadness lie underneath this statement. She justifies the lack of consideration for such a position with reference to her physical fragility and insufficient talent.

She goes on to narrate her meeting with Rudolf Nureyev and expresses her love for dancing the second variation of 'The Shades Pas de Trois' from the third act of his *La Bayadère*. She walks briskly upstage and dances it, simultaneously humming the musical score. Another association pops up, this time with Bel's *Shirtology*. As a dancer, I know all too well that, although singing the music while dancing is helpful to perform the movement in time and with the correct breath control, the effort required to do both simultaneously very quickly leads to exhaustion. Her dancing is elegant and precise, but soon her voice starts weakening and her breathing becomes much heavier. Spectators clap warmly; it becomes evident that such a task requires enormous effort and strength. She walks around trying to regain control of her breath. She breathes heavily, inhaling and exhaling from her nose. There is no rush though, nor any effort to obscure the process. This is not a typical

ballet performance. We breathe with her; our heartbeat slows down with hers. She drinks water and after almost a minute and a half she starts speaking again.

She shares with us her favourite ballets to interpret (by Marius Petipa, George Balanchine, Rudolf Nureyev and Jerome Robbins) and her least favourite (Maurice Bejart and Roland Petit). Admitting publicly her dislikes is neither an easy task nor a common one, which makes her apprehensive about the admission. We can see this from the manner in which she holds her breath at the end of her sentence, as if listening for our reaction. She relaxes again when she mentions Cunningham. We can see her thinking back, remembering pleasantly the experience of working with him. She removes her pointe shoes and wears her ballet slippers. She dances part of 'Points in space' with clarity and precision.

She speaks to us again, this time sitting down. She admits that she often wanted to dance male roles such as the Melancholic from Balanchine's *Four Temperaments*. Her voice drops a register when she confesses that her biggest dream was to dance Giselle. She stands up, wears her tutu and walks offstage. She starts humming. It is the same humming we heard at the beginning of the film. We can hear her singing it from offstage. She sounds melancholic and nostalgic, a dream coming true under different circumstances than she had hoped for, in a different context. She dances it with expressivity while humming. I keep thinking that the most haunting images of suffering I have seen were silent – paintings, photographs of countries at war. We do not hear their pain, their scream. Perhaps what makes them barely bearable is that the visual chokes the auditory. But here, for once, the suffering body of the ballerina in pain is heard. Not only is it heard through her voice's changing

strength and rhythm, but it is articulated in language. 'The question never came up'. The audience claps again.

Doisneau explains that although the scene from *Swan Lake* in which 32 female dancers of the Corps de Ballet dance together is considered to be one of the most beautiful moments in classical ballet, it involves long moments of immobility for the dancers: the 'poses' where 'they become the human décor for the stars'. Veronique explains that these moments are the most horrid for the Corps de Ballet dancers, because they make her want to scream or leave the stage. She asks the sound operator to play the music recording for of 'Swan Lake' and assumes a pose. We keep expecting her to move but she only does after a whole minute, only to assume another pose. She stays immobile again, this time for two and a half minutes. She dances again, almost in place. Another long pose. Another brief moment of movement and another pose – there is minimum movement involved in this section for about ten minutes. Of course in ballet our eyes are averted from the Corps de Ballet labour, to those drawing the lights to themselves: the stars (étoiles).

She receives a warm and appreciative clap from the audience, for whose pleasure bodies suffer onstage. One can see a glimpse of resentment in her expression – perhaps towards herself for wanting the audience's love and the expression of this love during the bow, but also towards the audience for enjoying her double suffering, both physical and emotional, onstage. She admits to loving the moment of the bow and hearing the audience at the end of the show. She performs two classical ballet bows and a contemporary dance one. The audience claps harder with each one. She exits. Curtain flies in.

Veronique Doisneau is about 'this body', the body of Veronique Doisneau. The subject of Bel's work from *Veronique Doisneau* on shifts from an examination of theatre as a meaning-making mechanism with bodies that represent 'any body' to the examination of specific bodies representative of the field of dance – or, as in *Disabled Theatre* (2012), to questioning which bodies can be represented at all in a dance work.

Unlike Bel's previous work, which exposes the theatre economy, the theatre as a space of representation and suggests specific relationships between the work and the spectator, *Veronique Doisneau*, a contemporary dance work in its composition, exposes the reality of the Subject of the work. It exposes the systems in which it and its subject are embedded: the dance economy, and more specifically the economy of ballet. Although technical virtuosity is mostly absent in Bel's previous work, in *Veronique* technique is used as a ready-made, as part of the performer's subjectivity. Music, as with technique, comes with the body represented. The work is about representation: who can be represented in dance in that space and how can they be represented. And unlike Bel's previous works which can be presented in any theatre, *Veronique* is made for the context of its presentation – the specific country, city and theatre where *Veronique* works⁵² – and deals with how we expect subjects of ballet to be represented and represent themselves onstage.

⁵² The work was later presented in different countries (Bel, 2006-2010). The work's transferability to different countries points to the fact that the hierarchies and problematic politics of the ballet world are not restricted to Paris. For my own reading of the work, it was important to use the presentation of the work in the place for which it was created, the place that it comments on and therefore with which it creates the most productive tensions. I want to point out the particular nature of the economy in which the work was embedded.

Finally, although in previous works of Bel we learn little or nothing about the performers, in *Veronique* we learn a lot about the specific performer through a long text spoken by the performer – an autobiographical text. It is this act of sharing her autobiography, of Veronique as a subject of dance testifying about the economy of which she is part and her position in it, on which I would like to focus and point to its implications and effects.

Veronique presents herself onstage as herself. By speaking about how much she is paid and where she finds herself in the hierarchical ladder of ballerinas, she reveals to us how the specific Ballet Opera and the ballet scene in Paris function. At the same time that she testifies about difficulties or unfairness she has dealt with, exposing inequalities and perhaps injustices in the economy of ballet, she is revealed as a suffering body, affected by these inequalities and unfairness. It is her testimony of facts that gives the work its efficacy and creates its potential: to effect further action by affecting her audience, how it understands dance and ballet more specifically, their knowledge or ignorance of how a ballerina's weightlessness and ethereality is produced and the romanticism that is associated with the world of ballet. Hannah Arendt suggests how small acts such as Veronique's testimony, her doing and suffering, can potentiate further action:

Because the actor always moves among and in relation to the other acting beings, he is never merely a 'doer' but always and at the same time a sufferer. To do and to suffer are like opposite sides of the same coin, and the story that an act starts is composed of its consequent deeds and sufferings. These consequences are boundless, because action, though it may proceed from nowhere, so to speak, acts in a medium where every reaction becomes a chain reaction and where every process is the cause of new processes. Since action acts upon beings who are capable of their own actions, reaction, apart from being a response, is always *a new action* that strikes out on its own and *affects others... the smallest act* in the most limited circumstances bears the seed of the same boundlessness, because one deed, and *sometimes one word, suffices to change every constellation*. Action, moreover, no matter what its specific content, always *establishes*

relationships, therefore has an inherent tendency to force open all limitations and cut across all boundaries (Arendt, [1958] 1998, p. 190, my emphasis).

Veronique's actions can have an infinite influence on others through the effect they have on her audience, for her actions – exposing her circumstances and by extension the ballet economy – have the potential to not only influence this specific audience, but whomever these audience members might happen to speak to about this performance. Although the influence of her actions and the actions these precipitate are boundless and unpredictable, they can perhaps affect the economy of ballet and its accompanying inequalities. Gilbert speaks about Arendt's aforementioned thinking in terms of an '*infinite relationality*' that 'constitut[es] both the condition of *possibility* and the inherently *limiting* factor of all human agency' (Gilbert, 2014, p. 112, my emphasis). What I am referring to here as the effect the work might have on its audience comes from its 'affect'.

Jeremy Gilbert states that although 'Freud's model of group psychology does not actually accord a primary role to the unconscious',⁵³ French philosopher Gilbert Simondon argues for "a fundamental layer of the unconscious which is the subject's capacity for action" (2005: 248)' and which he names the 'affective' or 'affectivo-emotive' subconscious (Gilbert, 2014, p. 112). Gilbert observes that the implication of the model offered by Simondon is that '*our capacity to act* in the world is... *dependent upon our relations with others*' (Gilbert, 2014, pp. 144-145, my emphasis). And these relations, although they 'cannot always be easily represented in any conscious way' are in fact 'constitutive of our subjectivity as

⁵³ Freud 'understand[s] the unconscious, irrational relations of suggestion which obtain between group members as being dependent upon an identification with the leader which may not be particularly rational, but is certainly conscious and representable' (Gilbert, 2014, p. 112).

such' (ibid.). Importantly, according to Gilbert, Simondon believes that these relations take place 'at the level of emotion and, crucially, "affect"' (ibid.):

'Affect' is understood...as a dimension of experience which is at once physical and psychological, a domain of varying intensities which are not fully articulated, individuated and represented in consciousness; 'emotion' might be understood as what we experience once we have identified an affective shift and represented it to ourselves as something which can be named and which can be understood as happening to us internally as individuals (Gilbert, 2014, pp. 144-145, my emphasis).

Canadian social theorist, writer and philosopher Brian Massumi also addresses affect. In his preface as translator of Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, Massumi articulates affect as a liminal state. He argues that affect is

a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution of that body's capacity to act...(with body taken in its broadest possible sense to include 'mental' or ideal bodies) (Deleuze and Guattari, 1998, p. xvi).

The relationship that Veronique builds with us by coming close to the edge of the proscenium stage so that spectators can see her better, by addressing those that she knows are too far away to see her, by revealing facts that expose the economy of which she is part and inherent inequalities that enable us to think about how these circumstances came about, influences the spectator at the level of affect. It is this affect that has the potential to influence action outside the performance by changing the way of thinking and acting of spectators and of the ballet economy. Echoing my thinking on Sehgal's *These Associations* that sentiment is not necessarily a bad thing; it is what brings us together before the work on ideas – which requires both the subjunctive and declaratory mode – has to happen, Simondon argues that what in the end binds groups are the 'shared sentiments and sensations' which function at a 'subconscious' level – not a 'commitment to some common activity or project...nor their identification with consciously identifiable images or ideas' (Gilbert, 2014, p. 144):

If we can speak, in a certain sense, of the individuality of a group or of people, it is not by virtue of a community of action – too discontinuous to be a solid base – nor of an identity of conscious representations, too broad and too continuous to allow the segregation of groups; rather it is at the level of the affective-emotional themes, mixtures of representation and action, that collective groupings constitute themselves. Inter-individual participation is possible when affective-emotive expressions are the same. The vehicles of this affective community are elements in the life of groups which are effective, but which are not only symbolic: the regime of sanctions and rewards, symbol, the arts, objects which are collectively valorised and de-valorised (Simondon 2005: 248-9) (Gilbert, 2014, p. 143).

This social nature of affect is also observed in Spinoza's thinking. Spinoza believed that 'all states of mind, being affective states, are also states of the body, to the extent that those states are themselves always relational states (Spinoza 2000)' (Gilbert, 2014, p. 146).

It is the economy of relations of the work to the dance economy and its production of affect that allow for its potential to emerge. Veronique's testimony exposes her reality and at the same time the economy of ballet, producing affect that can potentiate 'further action' by the spectators and those with whom they have conversations about the work. This is the reason why, as with the description of *The Show Must Go On* that follows, I use and move between the pronouns 'we' and 'I': to point to the work's address of the spectators as individuals who are part of a collective of individuals; who relate and can affect each other and the economies in which they live.

2. *The Show Must Go On* (21 performers, 19 songs) (Théâtre de la Ville, Paris, 2001)

I am writing about this work, although many other people have written about it, simply because I must. *The Show* is a manifesto on looking, on doing, on watching, on making and being – on being together as part of systems and how we understand and function in them. It is also for me a manifesto on how to make work, at least if one agrees with the ideas behind and produced by the work. I have chosen to discuss a specific production of *The Show*, the one at Théâtre de la Ville in Paris in 2001. I have chosen this specific production because I feel that it best illustrates what this performance and the theatre as a performance space is (still) capable of, its potential for change outside of the theatre walls. Because of the decision to discuss specific productions of both *Veronique Doisneau* and *The Show Must Go On*, my spectating of both was through a video recording – I did not become familiar with Bel's work until 2008 and therefore did not witness these two productions live. They are both nevertheless very well documented. For example, in *The Show*, the camera is placed in the auditorium amongst the spectators. It is from this auditorium seat that I watch the performance. And although I cannot physically sense the presence of the other spectators, touch the theatre seat or know how the specific space smells, I am equipped with better sight and hearing than perhaps a live spectator: as a result of the camera's ability to zoom in and out, I have the privilege to see and hear clearly details of the work and of spectators' interactions.

In my description of the *The Show*, I use 'we', being aware that this 'we' is comprised by many different individuals, with different values, backgrounds, lifestyles and perhaps prior knowledge of Bel's work, who do not/will not share

the same experience of or thoughts about the work. I am nevertheless using 'we' to emphasise that, in his work, Bel directs the gaze and attention of the spectator in such a way that 'we' all look at what he points to. This does not imply that 'we' understand what we see the same way or make the same associations, but that the relative bareness of the stage and the specificity of signs introduced onto it make the work function like fireworks: once they go off, everyone turns to look at them. Importantly, as with *Veronique Doisneau*, I move between the pronouns 'we' and 'I' to draw attention to the address of the spectators as individuals who are part of a collective of individuals; who relate and can affect each other and the economies in which they live.

I begin with an analysis of four moments in *The Show* that I find of great importance in discussing the work and its implications. I place myself in the position of the spectator and I describe what I see and hear. I also reflect on these perceptions and offer comment on issues that I further analyse in the section that follows. I try not to impose the term 'economy' – the framework of interest – early on, but instead use it as a constructive way to reflect on the entirety of the work and its efficacy at the end.

Moment 1

The Show starts like this: 'We' – the spectators – enter the theatre. We slowly find our seats under house lights. The house lights go down, indicating the beginning of the performance – 'we' all know this. So we quiet down. The lights onstage do not come on. Instead, we hear Leonard Bernstein's 'Tonight' from *West Side Story*.

MARIA
Only you, you're the only thing I'll see forever
In my eyes in my words and in everything I do
Nothing else but you
Ever

...
TONY
Always you, every thought I'll ever know
Everywhere I go you'll be

TONY & MARIA
All the world is only you and me

MARIA
Tonight, tonight
It all began tonight
I saw you and the world went away
Tonight, tonight
There's only you tonight
What you are, what you do, what you say

TONY
Today, all day I had the feeling
A miracle would happen
I know now I was right

...

We listen to the song until it ends. We are still in the dark. The song sets up the evening for us. It tells us that something is about to begin ('it all began tonight'), it reminds that we are in the dark because it is 'night' and that 'we' are together in this ('everywhere I go you will be'); that 'we' are important and wanted there ('There's only you tonight; What you are, what you do, what you say'). And it promises us a miracle of some kind. While I am listening to the song, I am thinking of my aversion to musical theatre, I am remembering seeing the specific musical on TV when I was young and I am re-watching it. I immediately start to think of the words that other people have used to discuss this performance; I am trying to turn their voices off, just for the period of time that I am watching.

The song ends – ‘finally’, I think to myself – and another song starts. Galt Mac Dermot’s ‘Aquarius / Let the Sunshine In’ sung by The 5th Dimension. As we are sitting in the dark we start noticing that the song and the lyrics ‘let the sunshine in’, like in a miracle, start shedding light onto the stage. Perhaps this is the miracle promised?

The lights rise slowly; we first see a rectangular pool of light, then the rest of the stage is slowly lit revealing it as such: a theatre stage. We can now see the red and gold curtains, the theatre boxes. The lights reveal the theatre as theatre. A sound technician at the end of the proscenium stage is now revealed. And last, but not least, we as spectators are revealed to the theatre and to each other. We are told slowly that everything we see and hear matters. The space, its making, our understanding of it, the people that labour to make spectacle happen, us watching it, sitting down with our expectations under dimmer light or no light at all, anonymous, expectant, demanding and hopeful. But we start to understand that this will be a different kind of spectacle. Exactly because it already told us all this, it pointed it out.

The Beatles’s ‘Come Together’ starts playing. ‘One thing I can tell you is you got to be free. Come together, right now. Over me.’ A group of performers enters the stage at the phrase ‘Come together, right now’. They are men and women, most of them in their 30s, two in their 50s. They form a semi-circle, facing the audience. They are wearing everyday clothes. They look quite uninterested in what is taking place. They are just there, almost as if they always had been. They are looking at us and at each other with no expectations, making no promises of anything special to come. They give the sense they have been there forever, waiting in the dark for

something to happen. They are not sad, just uninterested. So we should not expect much from them. There is going to be no big spectacle here; no great acting or dancing; no big bloodshed, no great romance, no pirouettes or singing coming from the soul. Nothing like that. Don't expect much. We are just here and you are here with us. Facing each other.

The next CD is loaded in: David Bowie's 'Let's Dance'.

Through the song, a relationship is established between those onstage and those watching in their seats. Another promise is made. The former express their love towards the audience – a relationship that, if it were to fail, would break the love, the relationship between audience and the performer. At the provocation 'let's dance', the performers start dancing in their personal bubbles in their own signature manner with spasmodic jerks and moves. Their individuality is revealed through their technical or non-technical movement patterns, the manner in which they are dressed, how they look at others, their spatial awareness, the movement choices they make. They are plugged into the dance while the phrase is heard and stop moving when it is not. This is like a children's game that reveals to us how the game is played, and by this point it also reveals that this is probably how things will continue: the song's lyrics will say something that will be enacted by the lights or bodies. The song ends, they breathe and recoup energy for the next task. There

is no concern here with smooth transitions or ensuring the continuation of the illusion like in conventional ballet or theatre.

Moment 2

The stage goes to complete dark. The lights then, both in the house, as well as on the stage turn a to a purple-pink. Edith Piaf's 'La Vie En Rose' starts playing.

'Je vois la vie en rose' / 'I see life in rosy hues'.

We literally see life in rosy hues – well at least the whole of the theatre space. But we also all see each other in the audience. In the absence of something taking place onstage, we turn to what is happening around us. We look at the people that we have been watching the stage with. I try to interpret what they think of the performance. They probably do the same. We feel that we are being watched, performing ourselves. People talk to each other, a young girl hugs her mother. These are the people that have been there with us all along, responding to *The Show* differently or similarly to us. This is a major development, but nevertheless within the rules established by the work – we do as the song says. The gaze is directed from the stage to the auditorium, to ourselves. We are left wondering if we are now part of the spectacle or indeed the spectacle itself. Or is this an intermission? Stage and auditorium go to dark. Some people clap, thinking that this is the end of the show. But *The Show* must go on. A new song starts playing. John Lennon's 'Imagine'.

To my surprise, I am having an emotional reaction to the lyrics, although I have heard of them many times before. The audience sings to the song, turns on lighters as if in a concert. It seems that it has started as a sarcastic gesture to the song, but turns into something else: a collective reaction to the song's lyrics. Seeing the number of lighters, I am thinking that many people in this audience smoke and at the same time am holding back tears. At the end of the song the whole audience claps.

We stay in the dark. Simon and Garfunkel's 'The sound of silence' starts playing:

At 'the sound of silence', the music stops playing. Some in the audience start speaking and others shush them. The music starts playing again, and when the track reaches 'the sound of silence' phrase we hear the phrase and the sound goes out. We are again in silence, but some of us will not have it: spectators bark, meow, whistle, clap. Certainly they are not listening to the sound of silence. In fact, they cannot stand it. Or, perhaps, they cannot accept that they, like the performers, are asked to follow, to play the rules of the game. They therefore disrupt it, they change the rules. Whenever in silence, it is their time to do what they choose with it. A few start clapping rhythmically, and a large portion of the audience joins them.

The clapping is infectious and it sounds as if the whole of the audience is now participating. They have taken control of the show and I am wondering whether they will allow it to continue. But they do. At 'the sound of silence' all noise stops. They seem to just want to be part of the show in their own terms. The song ends and a woman yells to the rest of the audience in the dark something in Portuguese that sounds like, 'is this how you understand silence?' She is the disciplinarian, the kindergarden teacher, 'the protector' of the show, the dissatisfied audience member with the rest of the collective's behaviour. Her interference provokes laughter from the rest of the audience, perhaps because they recognised themselves as having behaved like schoolchildren, or because the idea of someone judging their behaviour as if they were schoolchildren is surprising and amusing. What is certain is that this audience wanted to be part of the show in a material way, and they succeeded. I wonder, though, whether it was the anonymity of the darkness that allowed for the audience's sense of freedom to interrupt, disrupt, change the rules and roles. Had we been under lights, would so many people have participated in the clapping and vocalizing? Perhaps not. We already know the spectators' reaction from 'La vie en rose'. The audience was left to their own devices there as well, with no performers onstage creating the anticipation of something about to happen, that they would not want to miss. In 'La vie en rose' audience members looked at each other, talked to their friends, even their stranger-neighbours, but did not initiate or participate in a collective action of any kind nor drew attention to themselves as the surrogate spectacle of *The Show*. But in darkness, almost everyone participated. Its anonymity allowed – or enticed – spectators to do as the moment required without consideration for appropriateness and theatre conventions. Would this have ever happened in a British or a Greek audience? Why not? Does it not always take one – maybe two –

people to make it ok to behave in a certain way, to reveal through their behaviour that things could be happening differently? Is it not what Bel is doing: exposing how we normally see the theatre, its construction, the body onstage, its representation, technique and virtuosity, the use of scenography, the role of the audience? Perhaps those audience members in the dark, made Bel's dream come true. Not only they understood and played the game, but they made it their own. They took control and responsibility for how they can play it, their role in it and still allowed for *The Show* to go on. The song comes to an end and the audience claps. But in this instance they are also clapping for each other, for their collective participation in the game.

Moment 3

The previous song (George Michael's 'I want your sex') had left the performers standing in a line across the edge of the proscenium stage, facing the audience. By the end of the song, all but one performer downstage right have exited. An audience member yells at the lone performer 'What the fuck do you want?' There is an assumption that this lone performer wants something from the audience. For this audience member, this performer represents the choreographer and embodies the concept of the work. 'What the fuck do you want?' He seems to desire answers or to simply want to disrupt the show by pushing it – via the performer – to its limits. The performer continues to stand there in silence. I wonder what would have happened had that moment lasted longer, an uncomfortable amount of time. Would the annoyed spectator jump on the stage and remove the performer?

Moment 4

The performers all come on stage again, this time standing in a cluster configuration downstage. They hand a CD to the light- and sound-board operator, who starts playing it. It is Roberta Flack singing 'Killing Me Softly with His Song':

The performers lip-sinc it, continuing to sing while they sit down, then lie down, then die. A stage death. Is the audience finally getting what they want? A spectacle, mimesis, the death/end of the performers, the death/end of the show? This time, there is no reaction when the song ends. Dead bodies onstage, silent audience in the auditorium. Is a stage death all it takes? Is that what the audience is looking for? Does it just want the performers to take control and to create an illusion for them to watch?

Queen's 'The Show Must Go On' starts playing.

The songs seems at the same time to be a question for the audience and a call for the dead performers to resurrect themselves: a question for the audience about their expectations in relation to a show, a theatre work, of the space of the theatre and its function, of the role of the performers onstage and their relationship to them. What are we looking for as an audience? At the same time the song serves the role of the continuation of the game. The performers need to do as the song says: continue the show. They all slowly stand up and form once again a line downstage facing the audience. They bow twice and exit. The audience continues clapping. They come onstage again for a second bow joined by the light and sound operator and they bow twice again. They receive a standing ovation and exit. The audience has stopped clapping but they come onstage again for a bow – the song is still playing so they must continue. The audience feels obliged to clap again. They all exit.

The Internal Economy of 'The Show' and its Relation to the Theatrical Economy
or
'Does anybody know what we are looking for?'

I think that 'Does anybody know what we are looking for?' – the song's question – sums it all up. By 'it' I am referring to the question the work poses for the spectator, while at the same moment pointing with an invisible arm towards relations: of us to the theatre, of us to the work, of us to each other. But perhaps 'sum up' is not the appropriate verb here; it implies a closing down, when the work actually opens everything up into question.

(On bodies & performers)

Whereas *Veronique Doisneau* was about 'this body', the body of Veronique Doisneau, *The Show* is looking to present onstage 'any body'. The performers onstage are not characters, but themselves and although their individuality is made manifest through their physical characteristics, manner of standing, moving, looking and dealing with *The Show*, it is not expected that we get to personally know them. They do not physically interact with or speak to us. The bodies/people onstage become performers as a result of their presence onstage and the spectators gaze. Because these performers need to represent 'any body', these performing bodies – which any spectator could potentially replace – do things that 'any body' can do. There is no *obvious* theatre or dance technical virtuosity required here, although, according to Paolo Virno, performance is itself a virtuosic activity: '*an activity which requires the presence of others, which exists only in the presence of an audience...[it] makes sense only if it seen or heard*' (Virno, 2007, p. 52). It is important, however, to note two things: first, the work of course does not escape representation. Second, although it represents 'any body', the understanding of that is quite specific. We see bodies of different ages, but they are

all, for example, white bodies. And although there is no *obvious* technique, in fact there is a mode of performing here – I call it ‘the Bel performance mode’ – which is not easy to perform. For those with technical training in dance or theatre, it means stripping all that training away. For those with no training at all, it means finding that place where you can be looked at onstage without tension and without ‘showing’ that you are performing. It is about ‘being yourself’, but being yourself onstage in this kind of work is different; it requires a mode of presenting that is learned. Anyone seems to be able to perform this, but not without some ‘training’. Nevertheless, what is important is that this mode of being onstage *appears* and is *perceived* as something ‘any body’ can do. As Bel explains in his conversation with Pichet Klunchun as part of the performance *Pichet Klunchun and Myself* (2005), the point of presenting actions onstage that anyone can perform is to oppose the conventional hierarchical relationship of the theatrical space – where the spectators admire the performers for doing things that they cannot do – and create a *sense* of equality between those onstage and those in theatre seats (Bel and Klunchun, 2006). Again we are talking about a *perceived* equality, for the fact of the matter is that the construction of the space itself – for example, the separation and distance between performers and spectators, the situating of the performers at a different physical level than the spectators and the obscuring of the performance process by the proscenium arch – produces unequal relationships.⁵⁴

(On theatre as a space)

In his conversation with Klunchun, Bel observes that in a conventional performance, where the performers exhibit performance skills that the audience

⁵⁴ Richard Schechner (1988) and Marvin Carlson (1989) elaborate on the semiotics of theatre buildings and their effect on how spectators ‘mak[e] meaning of [their] experience’ (Carlson, 1989, p. 2).

does not have or, in general, when a performance is busy with action onstage, the energy of the theatre space is concentrated on the stage. His choice to present a 'quiet' stage – a stage with a few actions and actions that anyone can perform – instead is an attempt to move the energy of the theatre space to the middle (Bel and Klunchun, 2006) – where the creation of *The Show*, and all his shows, really happens; where they are constructed – to be shared amongst those onstage and those in the auditorium. These choices constitute Bel's philosophy in relation to spectacle and representation. As those who have written about Bel (and Bel himself) often points out, his philosophy of making work is influenced by French philosophy, especially by Roland Barthes's 'The Death of the Author' (2006) and Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* (1997).

We first encounter 'the society of the spectacle' in Roland Barthes's *Mythologies* (2009). There, Barthes discusses wrestling, the 'spectacle of excess' (ibid). As with theatre spectacle, in wrestling

[t]he public is completely uninterested in knowing whether the contest is rigged or not, and rightly so; it abandons itself to the primary virtue of the spectacle, which is to abolish all motives and all consequences: what matters is not what it thinks but what it sees (Barthes, [1957] 2009, p. 1).

Spectacle is thus perceived as negative, for it obscures the mechanisms that bring it to life and points away from its effects. It is this 'society of the spectacle' that Debord (1997) writes about. The following three quotes clearly illustrate Bel's approach to spectacle. . The spectacle, Debord argues,

presents itself simultaneously as society itself, as part of society, and as a *means of unification*. As a part of society it is the focal point of all vision and all consciousness. But due to the very fact that this sector is *separate*, it is in reality the domain of illusion and false consciousness: the unification it achieves is nothing but an official language of universal separation. The spectacle is not a collection of images; it is *a social relation between people* that is mediated by images (Debord, 1997, p. 7, my emphasis).

The alienation of the spectator, which reinforces the contemplated objects that result from his own unconscious activity, works like this: The more he contemplates, the less he lives; the more he identifies with the dominant images of need, the less he understands his own life and his own desires. The spectacle's estrangement from the acting subject is expressed by the fact that *the individual's gestures are no longer his own*; they are the gestures of someone else who represents them to him. The spectator does not feel at home anywhere, because the spectacle is everywhere (Debord, 1997, p. 16, my emphasis).

The spectacle is able to subject human beings to itself because the economy has already subjugated them. It is nothing other than the economy developing for itself. It is a once faithful *reflection of the production of things and a distorting objectification of the producers* (Debord, 1997, p. 10, my emphasis).

It is spectacle's ability to present itself as reality with which the spectator identifies even though it does not represent her reality and to position her in a contemplative mode that Bel attempts to counter by creating a spectacle of a different kind. One where motivations and consequences are exposed; one where the spectator can recognise gestures as her own but avoids processes of identification due to the lack of narrative and characters; and where she is not asked to contemplate, but to observe the function of a mechanism that produces effects, of a system that includes the lights, sound and actions of the performers and of the spectator herself, considering her role in it. Systems, as Baz Kershaw (2007) argues, can reveal the assumptions upon which they are built. *The Show* does so here. It reveals and questions our roles in the meaning making space of the theatre. The spectator in *The Show* needs to create meaning, for the maker has not infused the work with it or with any kind of narrative. It is here that we see the influence of Barthes's work 'The Death of the Author' on Bel's work. Barthes believed that,

to give a text an Author is to impose a limit on the text...The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination... [T]he reader is simply that someone who holds together in a

single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted [...] [T]o give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author (Barthes, 2006, pp. 147-148).

Bel kills onstage both the author and the performers. *The Show* is born due to the presence of the spectator and her co-authorship of *The Show*.

Like Sehgal's work, which draws its power from the museum as its place of presentation, Bel's work works best in the theatre because of this critique of spectacle and representation with which it engages. (From this point of view, it can be argued that both Sehgal's and Bel's work are site-specific). Bel has made attempts to present his work in visual arts settings. For example, he presented *The Show Must Go On* at the Musée D'Art Contemporain as part of the 2007 Lyon Biennial of Contemporary Art.⁵⁵ Furthermore, in 2012, Bel introduced his work *Shirtology* not only in the economy of the museum, but in that of the Internet. Tate Modern invited him to present this work as part of the BMW Tate Live series, which was streamed live for an online audience only. In the interview with art critic Nancy Durrant immediately preceding the Internet live-streamed performance, Bel states that despite being mediatised, because it was not edited, this was still a live performance. The live online audience was able to send questions for Bel to respond to, which he also considered part of the performance, because, for him, the show becomes a performance when the audience is part of it. He explains that he wanted to try the online performance medium because theatre is an archaic form that has not changed since ancient Greece. He acknowledges that in a live performance it is time and space that are commonly shared, but in this case, through live streaming, it is only time that is shared with all viewers. Bel was

⁵⁵ Bel was invited to present at the Lyon Biennial of Contemporary Art by Stéphanie Moisdon and Hans Ulrich Obrist (Moisdon and Obrist, 2007).

also joined by Tate Curators Catherine Wood and Cathy Noble for the interview, and the latter agreed that space is also shared, adding that this time it is a virtual space. Bel questioned how the community of people watching this might be defined. As opposed to the theatre where there are rules and people watch quietly in dark, here they were watching through a screen. Where might the artwork thought to have taken place? Had it taken place at Tate, where the performer and choreographer were present or where the audience was? Bel expressed his interest in presenting *Shirtology* online as a desire to get to know better the Internet medium, what it does and how it can be powerful, despite the fact that the audience – its commitment to seeing the work, its interest in the work and so forth – was different (Bel, 2012).

Only a few months after *Shirtology's* presentation at Tate, Bel – although relatively unclear if he was also referring to his work's presentation at Tate – expressed his regret for presenting his work in galleries. He explained that '[i]t became clear' to him that his work had to be presented in the theatre (Bel cited in Goldberg, 2012).

Recently I did an installation in a museum for the Lyon Biennial, and I know now that a museum is not my place...The relationship with the audience in the here and now is very important for me; I need to know the effects of what I produce. I love visual art. I love museums. I love galleries. But at the Lyon Biennial, I suddenly realized that they were not the right spaces for me. I need this meeting with you, with the audience, and I need to know that if I do something on stage, it affects you – and how you are affected affects me at the same time. There is a continuous reciprocal relationship during performance, and that is what my work has been about since the beginning. What is the relation of the people sitting in the darkness to the people standing in the light in front of them? That is my most minimal definition of theater. Now, after Lyon – which was a failure, in my opinion – I would say that theater and the practice of relating to the audience is what I am working on. That is much clearer for me now (Bel cited in Goldberg, 2012).

In fact, that theatre is the most appropriate space of presentation for his work was clear to him quite soon after the Lyon Biennial in 2007. In a Q and A discussion at

Sadler's Wells Theatre in 2008 he put it succinctly – albeit a bit rudely. In his response to an audience member's question as to why he continues to consider his work theatre and present it only in theatrical spaces instead of visual arts spaces like other artists who make work of the same 'culture' as his, he responded as follows: 'Because I need you to sit in the dark and shut up. I need time for my work to develop' (Bel, 2008).

(Time & Popular Music)

Time is indeed a crucial element in Bel's work. Things take the time they need to be accomplished. Time is therefore not theatrical, but actual time. It is, in general, slowed down – as we saw with Veronique – but also dependent upon elements of the work's construction, dependent upon the work's rules as part of a system. In *The Show*, that element is music. Here, music serves to keep time for the duration of tasks. What is equally important is the choice of music: popular music. Adorno (1976) discussed popular music in terms of high versus low discourse, considering popular music to encourage distracted and passive listening instead of critical thinking, thus contributing to social passivity. Popular music is nowadays considered to function like any other music, understood reflexively in relation to culture, one's world views and values and as part of culture through which people create meaning and the world in which they live (Hall, 1991). As with the actions performed onstage, Bel's choice of music contributes to a sense of equality. The audience is exposed to songs that it is familiar with, songs that address/reference the cultural context that they know as a result of globalisation, perhaps lyrics and rhythms that they know. Even if we assume that a spectator is not familiar with these songs, popular music's repetitiveness enables one to quickly learn them. The songs are also carefully chosen to serve structural or conceptual needs of the

show: the show needs to begin ('Let the sunshine in'), it should involve some dance (Let's dance'), sound and music; and a stage death to serve as the climax of the spectacle is always helpful ('Killing me softly'). At the same time the use of popular songs, because they are listened to in the theatre, contribute to a playfulness and everydayness that characterises the whole of *The Show*.

(This is 'The Show')

This is *The Show*. It begins by saying it will begin, that it is all about us, the audience. It tells us that the lights will come on – that the sunshine will come in – and it does; that the performers will come together and dance and they do; they ask us to see life as rosy, to imagine, to hear 'the sound of silence', to see them die and resurrect and we do. *The Show* tells us everything and then does as it says. It keeps its promises and we therefore trust it. And by keeping these promises, it exposes for the audience not only *The Show's* construction, but also the construction of all shows, our expectations as an audience, the function of the theatrical stage. It is able to do this because its literality, –by which I am referring to the repetitive and therefore quite quickly recognisable call (by the songs) and response (by the performers) in the work –puts the point of focus elsewhere: on how things are being done, on the relations amongst elements, on the apparatus of theatre as a whole. The internal economy of *The Show* – the organisation and arrangement of its constituent parts, its construction and dramaturgy, its economy of representation, of movement, of time and signs – creates a very specific economy of relations. Whenever a spectator asks 'why?', an answer is given through the work itself. Every decision of the show is the result of a need that comes from its function as a system. There is no excess, except in relation to the work exceeding the physical theatrical stage and expanding to the auditorium,

including the audience as its players, performers and authors. By exposing existing systems (of representation, of thought) but also the system of its construction, *The Show* allows for the spectator not only to understand how it is built, but also how she can enter it and – as we saw a few times from the audience’s participation – intervene in it. This is the economy of relation it has constructed: one where the performers cannot do more than the audience, they are not better at what they do than an audience member, they are not more important than the audience nor always more visible or vocal. An equal relationship is built – as equal as the proscenium stage affords. *The Show* affords the opportunity for the co-construction of the show, because it gives the time for the mind to wander, to process and allows us to find meaning in each instance.

We can also argue that *The Show*, as with all performance works, is an economy because of the different values participants (maker, performers, technical staff and spectators) find in or add to the work. It also participates in the economy of production (making of the work), distribution (presentation of the work) and consumption (consumption of the work by the spectators). We can also say that the work functions in the theatrical / cultural economy and that it is considered to come from the economy of dance, playing with the expectations of what theatre or dance can be and how it might be presented and represented. Yet, what I consider most important is the work’s production of an economy of relations. I propose that it is this economy that creates the potential of the work to effect change outside the theatre walls. I will look more in-depth at the second moment in *The Show* – ‘The Sound of Silence’ section – to support this.

At the beginning of this chapter, I used 'we' in my description of the work to point to the effects of Bel's direction of the gaze and attention of the spectator in such a way that 'we' all look at what he points to onstage. It is this construction of the 'we', as well as and in relation to the 'I' in the work, the work's economy of relations – in other words, the work's sociality – that I would like to further discuss. Although Bel, in an interview with Kristin Hohenadel from *The New York Times* (2005), commented that with *The Show* he wanted 'to produce a discourse, a way of thinking about the theater, the community...And I like this idea of community...What does it mean to live together, to respect one another or not, to exert power?', it cannot be assumed that the audience in any performance is any kind of community or collective. This being said, I believe that in the section of the work when the song 'The Sound of Silence' is played, in that moment of *The Show*, a shift in the system of the work took place through the audience's interruption, change of rules, ownership of *The Show*. This shift reveals not only the ethics of its economy, but also the potential of moments such as this to point to what is necessary for the function of a democracy due to a relationality – a sociality – they afford. Before I begin to further discuss the relation between the 'we' and the 'I' in the work, I would like to first offer a different understanding of the concepts of the 'individual' and the 'collective' and their in-between relationship. The theory that I find most constructive for this is Gilbert Simondon's theory of individuation (2005) as articulated by Jeremy Gilbert (2014).

Jeremy Gilbert observes that French philosopher Gilbert Simondon – a great influence on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, as well as Bernard Stiegler, Brian Massumi and Erin Manning – dealt extensively with the concept of 'individuation':

how individuality occurs, how 'we recognise the existence of distinct entities – personal, social or political' (Gilbert, 2014, p. 108). Simondon argues that 'there is no such thing as the individual as such: there are in fact only various events and processes of "individuation", which are never fully complete' (ibid.). And these individuations 'always occur in the context of a field of relations that necessarily pre-exists the event of individuation. It is this field of relations which Simondon calls the "pre-individual"' (ibid.). He emphasises that the pre-individual 'is not simply an aggregation of elements but primarily a set of relations...a field of relations – or perhaps a field of *relationality* – which precedes any actual positive terms' (ibid.). For Simondon, individuation 'always also occur[s] within a "transindividual" field': 'a field of relations between those preindividual elements which remain part of every individuated being and which never become fully individuated (2005, pp. 295-296).

Let us think then of each individual spectator in *The Show* in this manner. Each spectator is an entity, a moment and an effect of various events and processes of individuation, which are nevertheless incomplete. For example, a spectator who loves to watch dance can be considered the result of an individuation, that is, the outcome of a field of relations (the 'pre-individual') which pre-existed the individuation.

This pre-existing field of relations can include, for example, the existence of dance in the cultural field, the availability of cultural production, the existence of spaces to present such events, the economy in which these events are presented. The relations amongst these preindividual elements are what Simondon calls the 'transindividual' and which contributed to the entity's individuation – to value art

and specifically to love to watch dance – which along with numerous other individuations lead to the (individuated) spectator in that moment of watching *The Show*.

Now, let us examine the formation of a group, and by extension the group of *The Show's* spectators, according to Simondon's theory. Simondon understands group formation as a process of 'collective individuation'.

[E]ntry into the collective should be considered as a supplemental individuation, drawing on a charge of preindividual nature which is carried by living beings...[w]e can consider the [individuated] being as an ensemble formed from individuated and from preindividual reality: it is preindividual reality which can be considered as the reality which founds transindividuality. Such a reality is by no means a form in which the individual would be like a raw material but a reality extending the individual on either side, like a world in which it is inserted, in being at the same level as all the other beings which make up this world. The entry into the collective is an amplification, in a collective form, of the being which consisted of a preindividual reality at the same time as individual reality. This supposes therefore that the individuation of beings does not exhaust completely their potential for individuation, and that there is not only one state of completion of beings (Simondon, 2005, p. 317).

In these terms, the collective of *The Show's* spectators can be understood as an ensemble formed of individuated spectators and their preindividual reality who, upon their entrance into the group, undergo a further process of individuation – a 'collective individuation' – due to this entrance. What I would like to emphasise here is the potential of the sociality that resulted from this 'collective individuation' in the moment of 'The Sound of Silence'. I map the example of this onto an anecdote about the formation of an anti-fascist crowd in the street that Gilbert uses in his application of Simondon's theory.

The shift observed in the system of the work in the moment of 'The Sound of Silence', due to the audience's interruption, change of rules, ownership of *The*

Show, constitutes what Simondon would refer to as a ‘crystallisation’: a process which ‘only occurs in a solution that has reached a certain level of supersaturation, which can be understood as an extreme disequilibrium between the solution’s constituent elements’ (Gilbert, 2014, p. 109). Some spectators (the ‘solution’) ‘crystallised’ from the audience as a result of a disequilibrium – of the lack of sound and sight, of a lack of a show in *The Show* – seizing the opportunity to become performers, to interrupt, disrupt *The Show*, at the same time expressing ‘the political potential latent in the general collectivity’ of the spectators present in the auditorium (ibid.). This group’s formation was an ‘experience of “transindividuality”’: a set of shared expectations of the performance and feelings about the situation ‘formed the basis of [their] sense of collective purpose, despite the fact that every one of [them] would have attributed quite different sets of personal, ethical or political meanings to [their] actions’ (ibid.). And this depended upon ‘the existence and functioning of the general transindividual milieu’ within which the idea of what a show should be like was widely understood (ibid., p. 110).

Simondon’s account allows us to see that neither the individual nor the group are ‘ontologically prior’, but that it is ‘the general field of relations and potentialities’ that have the ‘prior status’ (Gilbert, 2014, pp. 110-111). It is therefore from this sociality, which was made possible by *The Show*’s economy (its construction that allowed room for the spectator to not only watch it but intervene in it and its production of an equal relationship between the work and the spectator), that potential emerges. Sociality, as Gilbert argues, is ‘a general condition of creative

possibility, which cannot be understood according to any individualist or meta-individualist logic'⁵⁶ (ibid.). He notes that,

any strong concept of democracy must be informed by such an understanding of sociality if it is not to degenerate into the too-limited forms of 'democracy' which liberal hegemony permits in the West today, or into the totalitarian meta-individualism of fascism or Stalinism (Gilbert, 2014, pp. 110-111).

This view – of sociality as 'a general condition of creative possibility' – echoes Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's concept of the 'multitude' (2009). Multitude is understood by Hardt and Negri as 'constant process of metamorphosis grounded in the common' (2009, p. 173), whereas Gilbert, who builds on Hardt and Negri's thinking, conceives of it 'as a collectivity which empowers but does not suppress the singularity of its constituent elements' (2014, pp. 201-202). Gilbert argues that the term multitude 'refers to the kind of group' that, what he calls the 'Leviathan logic' – the logic that is based on Thomas Hobbes's theory of individualism according to which 'the collective subject [is] composed of atomised individuals who relate to each other by virtue of their vertical relation to the locus of sovereignty'⁵⁷ (ibid., p. 60) – 'cannot imagine' (ibid., pp. 75-76). A group that is 'organized on the basis of lateral relations between its members, defined neither by an over-homogeneity or by a condition of general disorganization, possessing

⁵⁶ Gilbert argues that this is 'in stark contrast to the individualist tradition, which can understand the social only as an aggregation of individuals or as a uniform condition of meta-individuality, and agency and creativity only as proceeding from the activity of individuals or meta-individuals, but cannot accept sociality as being at one a condition of radical multiplicity and of creative possibility' (2014, pp. 110-111).

⁵⁷ Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), 'the founding figure' of individualism as a political theory (Gilbert, 2014, p. 35), believes that 'the ontological starting point for all social relations is a set of autonomous and unrelated individuals', who are only connected by their vertical relation to the locus of sovereign (ibid., p. 50). He imagines 'civil society as a human body' which '[i]nstead of being composed of a system variegated and complementary organs', it is 'a single giant individual – the Leviathan – composed of an aggregation of separate, formally identical but otherwise unrelated individuals' (ibid.).

an ontological specificity which is quite different from that of the individual'⁵⁸ (ibid.). He argues that it is a 'Leviathan logic' that 'characterizes...the practice of neoliberalism' (ibid., pp. 69-70).

Perhaps the group of spectators in *The Show* cannot be exactly described as a multitude – it is too temporary a collective to be characterised as such. But the relationship amongst the members of the audience can be understood as lateral due to their position as audience members. In addition, this group was neither homogeneous nor characterised by a general disorganization. Furthermore, although it can be argued that there was a perceived hierarchy between the audience and Bel, and that the group was formed on the basis of a 'constitutive outside' (Gilbert, 2014, p. 101) – in our case Bel and his choice of playing with/failing the audience's expectation – what is most important here is the relationship amongst the audience members. Elias Canetti, who also opposes the 'Leviathan logic', argues that what defines the relationship of members of the crowd to it is not how they relate to the leader; it is instead the equality that characterizes their relationship with one another (1962, pp. 29-30).⁵⁹ It is the economy of relations that the work creates that enables the creation of this group and for its potential to emerge.

This potential in this moment of *The Show* emerged out of a shared set of assumptions of what a show should be like and of affects that resulted from these assumptions and the dispositions of the spectators. Simondon would call this

⁵⁸ The concept of the 'multitude' is inspired by Baruch Spinoza, who understood power as that 'which is always defined by the relation between a body and other bodies (Spinoza 2000)' and freedom as 'never simply the freedom to dispose of property, but always the freedom to act in the world creatively' (Gilbert, 2014, pp. 75-76).

⁵⁹ Canetti also believes that crowds are formed spontaneously and that they are self-organised (1962, p. 57).

common ground ‘the general field of relations’ (Simondon cited in Gilbert 2014, p. 108), whereas Hardt and Negri use the term ‘common’ (2009). Gilbert argues that the ‘common’ ‘designate[s] that shared set of capacities, disposition, affects and interests which is the basis of the multitude’s creative potential, of which “the commons” is always a material and partially institutional expression’ (2014, p. 165). And although a dimension of this sociality – this ‘general condition of creative possibility’ according to Gilbert and Simondon or this ‘common’ according to Hardt and Negri⁶⁰ – is appropriated and commodified by capitalism, it is this ‘common’ that is the ‘domain of creative potential which is constituted by, and constitutive of, sociality as such’ (ibid., pp. 167-168).

Gilbert argues that ‘to preserve and build commons – political and material instantiations of the common – is always to preserve and build the conditions of possibility for unpredictable future individuations’ (2014, pp. 167-168). He moves

⁶⁰ The ‘common’ ‘names precisely that which contemporary capitalism works by claiming, capturing and commodifying’ (Gilbert, 2014, p. 166). Hardt and Negri argue that “we must try to conceive exploitation as *the expropriation of the common*. The common, in other words, has become the locus of surplus values. Exploitation is the private appropriation of all of the relationships that have been produced in common...(2004: 150-51)’ (Hardt and Negri cited in Gilbert, 2014, p. 166). Hardt and Negri do not see ‘every productive capacity of our common life as always already captured by the capitalist machine, however. In fact they argue that there is a dimension of the common which can itself never be wholly captured and commodified, and that is this “surplus” which is the basis for all transductions of mere antagonism into actual revolt – it is the “wealth, that is, a surplus of intelligence, experience, knowledge and desire” which informs all real attempts at political transformation. Cesare Casarino offers a fascinating exposition and revision of this concept, naming this form of revolutionary “wealth” as “surplus common” and exploring its relationship to Marx’s notion of surplus value. “Surplus is potentiality qua potentiality...The point is that *there is only one surplus*, which may effect and be effected in different ways. On the one hand, surplus is that which capital strives to subsume absolutely under surplus value and yet manages to do so only relatively because it is structurally unable to subsume without at the same time negating and foreclosing that which it subsumes – thereby enabling the emergence of surplus common. On the other hand, surplus is that which envelops and subsists in the common as surplus common, that is at the common’s distinct yet indiscernible element of potentiality, and hence also as the condition of possibility of all the common’s fully exploitable and subsumable actual elements – thereby enabling the emergence of surplus value” (Casarino and Negri 2008: 22)’ (Gilbert, 2014, pp. 166-167).

on to articulate its concrete implications: that 'political and social institutions should be judged partly in terms of their creativity... of the extent to which they facilitate the expression of that creative potential which is implicit in any set of social relations', and the extent to which 'they enable any given collectivity to explore its own potential' and 'facilitate the expression of this creative potential (ibid.). He suggests that '[t]ruly democratic institutions' should also enable 'the creation of institutional practices and decision-making procedures which involve all participants in the management of a service in ongoing dialogue and real decision making' (ibid., p. 169). *The Show's* spectators, because of the sociality that the work constructs, give us a taste of this in the manner in which they, both as individuated beings as well as a collective of such beings, are afforded the opportunity to express their creative potential. Gilbert observes that agency is exercised and therefore decisions are taken not by individuals but through the encounter in their difference and multiplicity and in 'the ongoing and perpetual self-problematisation of the group and its constituent identities' (ibid, pp. 199-200), as we saw in the differences of action and reaction of *The Show's* spectators.

Agency exists, freedom is real, but they re not exercised by 'individuals' or even, very often by 'subjects': rather they are names for the fluctuating possibilities which are produced or supressed by the shifting relations between singularities, persons, brains, ideas, affects, and so on. Decisions are taken, or rather they *emerge*, but they are not, as the liberal imagination presumes, the actions of individuals or meta-individual institutions: rather, they occur in the interstices between bodies and between conscious intentions. I think this is precisely what Critchley means by '*hetero-affectivity* prior to any auto-affection and disturbing any simple claim to autonomy' (Gilbert, 2014, p. 175).

As also argued in the analysis of *Veronique Doisneau*, the potential that emerged in the moment of 'The Sound of Silence', from that sociality, was also a result of an affect that resulted from the audience's engagement with *The Show*. Both John Protevi and Jeremy Gilbert believe that affect is crucial to effecting change. John

Protevi valorises what he calls 'joyous affect': 'affect which increases the potential power of bodies, enabling them "to form new and potentially empowering encounters" (2009, p. 51). Gilbert believes that

whereas the individualist tradition and Leviathan logic can only understand social relations as ultimately *limiting* the capacity of individuals, this philosophy emphasises the extent to which the only thing that increases the capacity of bodies is in fact their ability to form productive relations with other bodies, and it specifically identifies joy itself with such an augmentation of potential and relationality (2014, p. 147).

The Show produces affect and creates a specific economy of relations: of equality between individuated individuals whose temporary collective is organized on the basis of 'lateral relations', which is not defined by an 'over-homogeneity' nor a 'condition of general disorganization' and which possesses an 'ontological specificity which is quite different from that of the individual' (Gilbert, 2014, pp. 75-67). It is from this sociality – this 'general condition of creative possibility' – afforded by *The Show* through the economy of relations it creates and the affect that the work produces that its potential to effect change outside of its framework as an artwork emerges and points to the necessity of such relations in the larger society.

3. Bel as producer/ Efficacy of his work

If *Veronique Doisneau* was about 'this body', the body of Veronique Doisneau, *The Show Must Go On* is about 'any body'. *The Show* and *Veronique* can be thought of as two sides of the same coin. The first exposes the theatre economy, theatre as a space of representation and suggests specific relationships between the work and the spectator. The second exposes the reality of the Subject of the work. The first creates systems to expose the economy of the work – its construction – the second

exposes the systems in which the work and its subject are embedded: the dance economy, and more specifically the economy of ballet. *The Show* resists technical virtuosity, *Veronique* uses it as a ready-made, as part of the performer's subjectivity. *The Show* can function in any theatre space, but *Veronique* is made for the context of its presentation: the specific country, city and theatre where *Veronique* works.⁶¹ Music in the first is used as part of a system, while in the second, as with technique, it comes with the body represented. *The Show* tries to escape representation; *Veronique* is about representation: who can be represented in dance in that space and how can they be represented? The first deals with the expectations of what is theatre, dance and our relationship to the work and to the space as spectators, whereas the second deals with how we expect subjects of ballet to be represented and represent themselves onstage. In *The Show*, we know and learn nothing about the performers, while in *Veronique* we learn almost everything. In *The Show*, other than the lyrics sung, there is no text spoken by the performers, whereas in *Veronique* there is a long text spoken by the performer – an autobiographical text.

Bel's work, whether its subject is the theatre as a meaning making mechanism – as seen with *The Show* – or the representation of specific subjects related to dance – as with *Veronique* – is preoccupied with constructing certain relations with the spectator: of equality, of co-production of meaning, of affect and of questioning of the spectator's role in relation to and as part of systems constructed by the work

⁶¹ The work was later presented in different countries (Bel, 2006-2010). Its transferability to different countries points to the fact that the hierarchies and problematic politics of the ballet world are not restricted to Paris. For my own reading of the work it was important to use the presentation of the work in the place for which it was created, the place that it comments on and therefore with which it creates the most productive tensions. I want to point out the particular nature of the economy in which the work was embedded.

and the systems and economies in which the work is embedded. It does so by raising questions of technical virtuosity, of spectacle, representation and participation and by exposing the economy of the work (its construction) and the economies of theatre and dance in which it is embedded. I am now interested in looking at Bel and his work's relation to the neoliberal capitalist economy: how he is embedded in this economy and how his work might resist or reproduce it through the economies of thought, encounter and relation it produces.

It can be argued that there are a number of ways that Bel contributes to the reproduction of the neoliberal economy. For example, as a choreographer, Bel contributes to his performers' precarity by working with them on a project-to-project basis. This is an outcome of, firstly, the amount of funding distributed to artists that make this kind of work and, secondly, of the needs of each of his works. It is important to note, though, that Bel's work is always funded by the state: from the tax money of French citizens and not by private organisations or corporations (Bel and Wood, 2013). In fact, Bel, in a conversation with Catherine Wood (Curator of Contemporary Art and Performance at Tate Modern) at *Frieze London* in October 2013, stated that he refused to sell his work as videos to galleries despite the generous compensation he would have received, because he believes that since his work is paid for by taxes, it belongs to the people (ibid.).

It can also be argued that Bel's work is elitist, because it sometimes relies on irony. Firstly, I disagree with this argument because I believe that Bel's work relies more on humour than on irony. Using Isabell Stenger's words, Xavier Le Roy notes that humour 'is any capacity to recognise that you are yourself a product of the story whose construction you are trying to follow and in a sense where humour is

distinct from irony' (Stengers cited in Buffard and Le Roy, 1999). Bel's work treats the spectator as co-conspirator in the process of meaning creation, which also contributes to the work's playfulness. Second, although the spectator might get a certain enjoyment reading the references in the work, and although some spectators may initially feel alienated by the work's aesthetics or the failing of her initial expectations, if she gives time to the work she will be able to access it and find the humour in it without *needing* to have prior knowledge of the work – especially the works examined here – or its references.

Furthermore, Bel's work can be considered politically safe (or at least not radical enough for our contemporary moment) especially when compared to work that is considered to be addressing current problems directly, that situates itself outside institutions and within the public realm and/or encourages or incorporates the physical participation of the spectator. We can think of, for example, works such as Spanish artist's Santiago Sierra's *Group of persons facing a wall* (Tate Modern, 2002). For this work, according to the work's description made available to the spectator, homeless women were paid a night's stay in a hostel to stand still in a line facing a wall for an hour. This work is considered to be iterating in the space of the performance existing social inequalities in order to expose them while at the same time implicating the spectator. Another well-known example used by both Bourriaud (2002) and Gilbert (2014) is the work of Thai artist Rirkrit Tiravanija. His work *Untitled (Free)* (1992), for example, involved the artist converting a gallery into a kitchen where he served rice and Thai curry for free, engaging the spectator in conversation while eating together. Gilbert argued that this work was able to produce a 'convivial and egalitarian social situation...[an] experiment exploring sociability as a dynamic and pleasurable element of the experiential

continuum, and in opposition to the commodification and marketisation of all social relations under neoliberalism' (2014, p. 188). However, the lack of physical proximity and/or physical participation of the spectators in Bel's work does not make it less political nor does it influence the possibility of what Gilbert calls the 'shared joyous affect' or 'collective joy' (2014) and therefore its potential to empower bodies.

Gilbert argues that, '[e]ven an activity as superficially solitary as reading in a library can be understood as an experience of ['collective joy']', insofar as this experience, like in Bel's work in the theatre, 'involves a creative and productive interaction between singularities': between the elements of the spectator's 'conscious and unconscious attention' (Gilbert, 2014, pp. 201-202) which are engaged in watching the work. In Bel's case, this encompasses the ideas expressed in the work, the relations of the work to the physical space of the theatre as a space of representation and the economies in which it is embedded. Much like the example Gilbert gives about the library as a space of 'collective joy', Bel's presentation of work in the theatre

can only exist – can only be individuated – as the consequence of a complex process of social interactions, and can only function well to the extent to which it works as a commons to increase the capacities of its users, while remaining sufficiently flexible and open in form and function to accommodate the invention of multiple and changing uses (Gilbert, 2014, pp. 201-202).

Bel's work does exactly this: its openness enables the spectator to enter the work and imbue it with her meaning, increasing her capacity. It creates a temporary collective of individuals who are empowered by being in what Gilbert refers to as a 'space of decision' (Gilbert, 2014, pp. 201-202). A space

within and from which new individuations and new becomings can emerge. This is not to say they are necessarily spaces within which actual

conscious choices are made (although they might be). In fact they are spaces within which we can only experience the ultimate *impossibility* of making a 'decision' or 'choice' according to the classical liberal model of the rational, intentional, autonomous and autochthonous subject: a decision which is final, which is ours alone, and which is an expression of only our rational interests. But it is by virtue of this fact that they are spaces conducive to the expansion of a field of potentiality and possibility without which no new decisions, no new individuations, no collective joy, and hence no democracy are ever possible (Gilbert, 2014, pp. 201-202).

Bel's work becomes a space of decision where we realise that decisions are always a result of our relation to multiple others. Therefore, although his work is not explicitly political in the manner of current radical or activist work, its function is political as a result of its sociality.

A crucial task for social change is to struggle for it on several different fronts, including creating artwork that, like Bel's, attempts to offer a new way of thinking and approaching what we already know, what we are already familiar with, and creates *spaces of decision, affect and creative possibility*. As Gilbert suggests, it would be a mistake to think that change can take place as a result of the actions of actors from a single sphere:

It is...a mistake to imagine that either the strategic, molar and hegemonic or the molecular, affective and experimental dimensions of political struggle can ever be ignored. Nor can any one of them be expected to bear the full weight of hopes and demands for social change. In most contemporary contexts, it is to be expected that the multiple tasks required to make change possible are likely to be borne by quite different kinds of agent: from art movements to think tanks to university departments to civil society organisations to political parties⁶² (Gilbert, 2014, p. 204).

⁶² Gilbert suggests that 'such tasks include generating new modes of thought and perception which might contribute to cultural change; crystallising those affective changes into meaningful political demands; strategically co-ordinating a range of demands and constituencies into a viable political coalition; delivering a coherent programme for government which instantiates some of those changes; recruiting and mobilising a cadre of professional politicians who can implement this programme; sustaining the affective and semiotic potency of those demands to the point that such realisation becomes likely; and many others' (2014, p. 204). He points out that '[b]ecause such task requires quite different dispositions and competences, it is not surprising that their agents often dislike each other and find mutual comprehension difficult; but it is probably necessary for any kind of democratic progress that there should exist a degree of what we might call

Bel's work resists the ideas, values and rationalities of neoliberal capitalism through the relations to people – relations of equality, of co-production, of trust and of affect – to time and to space that he creates within the work and with the manner in which he situates the work and exposes the economies in which it is embedded; through what I understand and I will shortly elaborate on as the production of *ethical encounters*. It reveals the reason why theatre, when critiqued as an institution in the manner of Bel – acknowledging the problems of people in the dark watching others labour in the light (Ridout, 2006) – is still – even after all the arguments about participatory and site-specific performance and 'relational aesthetics' (Bourriaud, 2002) – an important place of presentation because of its specific conditions of time and space and the relationships and sociality these produce. We agree and promise to be there and on time, to watch together and think about what we watch for the duration – most likely – of the work. Theatre is a space of collective attention, where, much like in protests, individuality is not suppressed, but many people give attention to the same thing at the same time. When we experience something in the presence of others there is a different sense of responsibility, a different relation to the work. Furthermore, unlike the museum's production of the social, where the individual, her freedom of movement and her rhythm is emphasised without a consideration of her relation to 'others', to a collective⁶³, theatre's sociality enables us to give time to something together in a designated space. It is theatre's sociality that I considered important in the contemporary moment, when there is a lack of time to think, to *be* with others, to organise and act.

'molecular sympathy' between them. Arguably one of the most debilitating features of the political Left – mainstream and radical – in recent decades has been its inability to connect or even resonate at all with sites of radical cultural experimentation' (ibid.).

⁶³ In the museum one can visit and look at the artwork as a singular spectator, at any time during the gallery's opening hours and walk around alone simply looking at artwork.

The economy of Bel's work – the manner in which he questions himself as an artist, the type of work he makes, the manner in which he enters it in the economy of art, theatre and of production more broadly – produces *ethical encounters*. By an ethical encounter, I refer to a Levinasian encounter that recognises fully the alterity of the other and the ethical responsibility towards her in non-reciprocal terms (Levinas, 1969). It is an encounter that also recognises that, although this distance to the other(s) exists, the other(s) is(are) connected to the 'I' by relations to the world, by an inescapable and always present sociality.

As I suggested through Bel's work, as well as in *'Inter-Vention' 3: On Ethics and Economy*, the terms 'ethics' and 'economy' are inextricably connected. There, I redefined 'economy' as 'support of "the other"'. Bel 'supports' the "other" by challenging the spectator and the economies in which the work is embedded. He does this by creating an economy of relations that produces *spaces of decision, affect and creative possibility*, which in turn produce *ethical encounters*. It is these encounters that I believe have the potential to effect change outside the frame of the artwork. These thoughts on Bel's work, the consideration of the relationship of ethics to economy and economy's redefinition as 'support of "the other"' are what I take into consideration for the making of *IDEA: THIS IS GOOD*, the last work as part of this research project.

'INTER-VENTION' 5

***IDEA: THIS IS GOOD* (2014)**

Gasworks Gallery, London



Photo by Katerina Paramana

1. IDEA: THIS IS GOOD and its Economies

The concept of *IDEA: THIS IS GOOD*, the last work as part of this PhD research project, emerged from my thinking, making and writing thus far: from my concern with the effects of neoliberal capitalism, the ethics attached to it, the practices emerging from it and its consequent effects on the social; the conclusions I drew from the examination of Tino Sehgal's and Jérôme Bel's work and the making of my own; the consideration of the relationship of ethics to economy; and the redefinition of economy as 'support of "the other"' I offered, pointing to the need for an ethics of care, support and justice not only in the conceptualisation and function of an economic system, but also in the making and presentation of an

artwork.⁶⁴ It is this thinking, making and writing that enabled me to ask again questions through my practice: through the making and presentation of a new work.

However, the development of such a work remained at a theoretical level until there was a need to materialise and present it in a specific economy. The opportunity to do so came about when Portuguese visual artist Pedro Lagoa invited me to create and present a work at Gasworks Gallery in London as part of his exhibition the *archive of destruction*. Pedro, at the time a resident artist at Gasworks, had seen my work *Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?* ('Inter-Vention' 2) at Galeria Boavista in Lisbon in December 2012. While there, Pedro and I had conversations about *Talking with Strangers*, the political landscape in Europe at the time and our role in it as artists. The concept of the *archive of destruction* was aligned well with that of my work. Pedro articulated the concerns of the *archive* in the following manner:

The *archive of destruction* is an evolving structure dedicated to the collection of documents on actions and ideas that represent a negation of its basic function, which is the preservation of memory. In a simplified manner, one can say that the acts of destruction that find their place in the collection of the archive follow two main lines: one directed against physical elements; the other *against ideas or abstract elements – immaterial forms of destruction*. On the material side of destruction are comprised documents related with the representational aspects of acts of destruction directed towards physical objects or structures. The destruction towards ideas reflects more abstract and subjective practices of *rupture with established ideological systems, codes, practices, values, theories* (Lagoa, 2013, my emphasis).

I considered my redefinition of economy (and the redefinition of any term for that matter) a form, not necessarily of destruction of the existing understandings,

⁶⁴ As elaborated in 'Inter-Vention' 3, I arrived at the redefinition of economy by rehabilitating a Byzantine era definition of the term (where it was defined as 'support, attention, the joining with another's forces, collaboration, co-working' and so forth – Kriaras, 2014) and extending it to 'economy is support of "the other"'.

exclusions and applications of the term, but one of rupture with the established ideological systems, ethics and practices associated with it. Therefore, the concept of *IDEA: THIS IS GOOD* was immediately related to and commented on two economies: the immediate context of the *archive of destruction* and the larger economy.

The third economy under consideration in making this work was the economy of its space of presentation: that of the gallery. Gasworks is a contemporary art gallery that 'encourag[es] the exchange of ideas between international and local practitioners...offering a programme of exhibitions and events, artists' residencies, international fellowships and educational projects', as well as talks, 'workshops, screenings and seminars' (*Gasworks Gallery*, 2014). Furthermore, the 'areas of activity' at Gasworks are 'linked by a commitment to constantly reassess the position of artists within their wider cultural, social and political frameworks' (ibid.). This open, non-prescriptive and international context seemed fruitful for the presentation of *IDEA: THIS IS GOOD*.

However, the conditions of the gallery space both enabled and problematised the creation and presentation of my work. On the one hand, the gallery space offered a solution to my concern with how my redefinition – itself a proposition for an ethics of being in the world and encounter with an 'other' – could be both physically present in the work as an object⁶⁵ and function performatively: that the work allowed for the idea to be enacted within it. By allowing for the format of an installation performance, the gallery space enabled me to do both.

⁶⁵ I imagined it initially as a neon sign on a white wall, much like those created by Martin Creed or Tracey Emin.

On the other hand, the gallery's production of the social, the mode of sociality it affords which is similar to that of the museum, is more akin to that of neoliberalism: it emphasises the individual, her freedom of movement and her rhythm without considering her relation to 'others', to a collective. Unlike theatre, the gallery space is one that you can visit and look at the artwork as a singular spectator, at any time during the gallery's opening hours and a space, where you can walk around alone simply looking at artwork. The conditions of time and space and therefore the sociality conventionally afforded by the gallery were very different to those of the theatre, which in my discussion of Bel's work I considered important in our contemporary moment. If the gallery was the most appropriate space for the communication of the ideas of this work, which was already materialising as a work closer to visual arts than theatre, I questioned how I could create conditions within that space that were similar to those in the theatre in terms of the conditions of time and space and therefore the thinking and sociality the work afforded.

This question/problem was addressed by the concept of the work itself. The redefinition of 'economy is support of "the other"', and its translation to a performance installation where the definition had to perform itself in the action of the work, already required the simultaneous presence of an 'other': another spectator. Most importantly, it did more than simply require the physical presence of another spectator. The two spectators had to work together: engage with the work both mentally and physically, consider its proposition, negotiate, make decisions and take action together in order for the work to perform itself and for themselves to 'see' it. They had to agree and promise to be there and on time and

think and work together for the duration of the work (only this time the duration of the work depended on them), give their *attention* to it at the same time, both as individuals and as partners, and be responsible for one another. A shared time, space and responsibility, collective attention and decision-making were elements inherent in/built *into* the work. My use of the term 'spectator', instead of visitor, viewer or participant, is intentional here: although the term 'spectator' can imply that the visitor could only watch the work, whereas in *IDEA: THIS IS GOOD* she could only 'see' the work by performing tasks with an other, I intentionally use the term to allude to the importance of the conditions of the theatre.

2. The work

This is an installation performance. It requires two people. It considers the effects of neoliberalism, which extends 'economic rationality into all areas of social life' (Barnett, 2010), on the systems of which we are part, on our relationship to people, to things, to time and space (excerpt from my artist statement for *IDEA: THIS IS GOOD*⁶⁶).



Photo by Katerina Paramana.

⁶⁶ For all texts that were present in the work and referred to in this section, please see Appendix 4.

IDEA: THIS IS GOOD, an installation performance, proposed a rupture with the current economic system by reconceptualising it through the redefinition 'economy is support of "the other"'. Although this work was made using a systematic approach (every object and action in the work in some way enacted the definition 'economy is support of "the other"'), the work itself was not constructed as a system. Rather, it was concerned with the system in which it was embedded. The work consisted of several objects. To maintain some consistency with the concept of the work ('economy'), I provide these objects in the manner I consider most economical – a list.

- A sign suggesting the order of tasks to be performed by two spectators. The sign read,

PART 1: *The Ladder*

Have a go.

(This performance requires two people).

PART 2: *The Desk*

Have a look.

PART 3: *The Balloons*

Have a blast.

(This performance requires two people).

- The phrase 'economy is support of "the other"'. I constructed each letter of the phrase with electrical cord. The letters were then supported/connected to one another by electrical wire and the entire phrase was spray-painted neon yellow.
- An old unstable wooden ladder, supported against a wall.
- A shelf attached to the same wall to the left of the top of the ladder, upon which the phrase 'economy is support of "the other"' stood. The height of the shelf ensured that the phrase was hidden from view unless on the ladder.
- A text with the etymology of the Greek word for economy (oikonomia: οἶκος [ikos] (house) + νόμος [nomos] (rule/law)) and definitions of 'oikonomia'

(including the one I rehabilitated) accompanied by examples.⁶⁷ This text was typed in size 8 font in order to only be legible from the top of the ladder. It hung on the wall to the right of it.

- A magnifying glass hanging from the ladder to help the spectator read the etymology and definitions of economy.
- A table for the balloon task that included: uninflated balloons on which I had handwritten the phrase 'IDEA: THIS IS GOOD', a pair of scissors, some rope, Blu Tack, thumbtacks and a poem. The poem gave directions for the task. It read: 'It is your breath that keeps me going. / Breathe life into me / and take me with you / or help me stand on my feet. / If you don't like me / let me leave my last breath / here. (If you and your partner have the same opinion, use one balloon. If you have different opinions, use one balloon each)'.
- A desk with texts on the origin, history and theorisation of economy, a programme and an artist's statement that included the articulation of how 'support' and the 'other' were conceptualized in this work.⁶⁸
- An instruction to the spectators, which was placed both on the ladder and on the balloon table. The instruction, a play also on the etymology of *oikonomia* = house + rules, read: 'House Rules: This performance requires two people'.

⁶⁷ Definitions included: the theoretical science that deals with the economy; restriction on consumption or use especially of material goods; the dialectical relationship between parts of a whole, especially of a literary work; attention, regard, care, support, assistance, attention, guardianship, keeping, safekeeping, tidiness, neatness, trimness, trust, aid, attendance, tending, taking care, minding, economic aid, espousal, help, relief ; government / governance, management of household; arrangement, ordering; the joining of forces/strengths, collaboration, espousal, taking care, co-action/working/struggle/fight; precaution measure; foresight, intentionality; preparation; charity, philanthropy; monetary reserve, savings; salary, income; armature, weaponry (Kriaras, 2014).

⁶⁸ 'In this work I propose that the "other" can be the artwork itself, the spectator, the relationships produced between the work and the visitor due to the artwork, the economies in which they are both embedded, the "other" as an idea, a system, the fellow citizen. I question what "support" might mean in relation to these different conceptualisations of "the other", understanding "support" not only as translated from the Greek definition of "*oikonomia*" (e.g. care, support, assistance, the joining of forces etc.), but also as the act of preventing from falling, giving time and attention, being in solidarity, keeping promises, questioning, gifting, sharing, challenging, disagreeing, resisting' (excerpt of artist statement for the work, see *Appendix 4*).



Photo by Katerina Paramana.



Photo by Katerina Paramana.

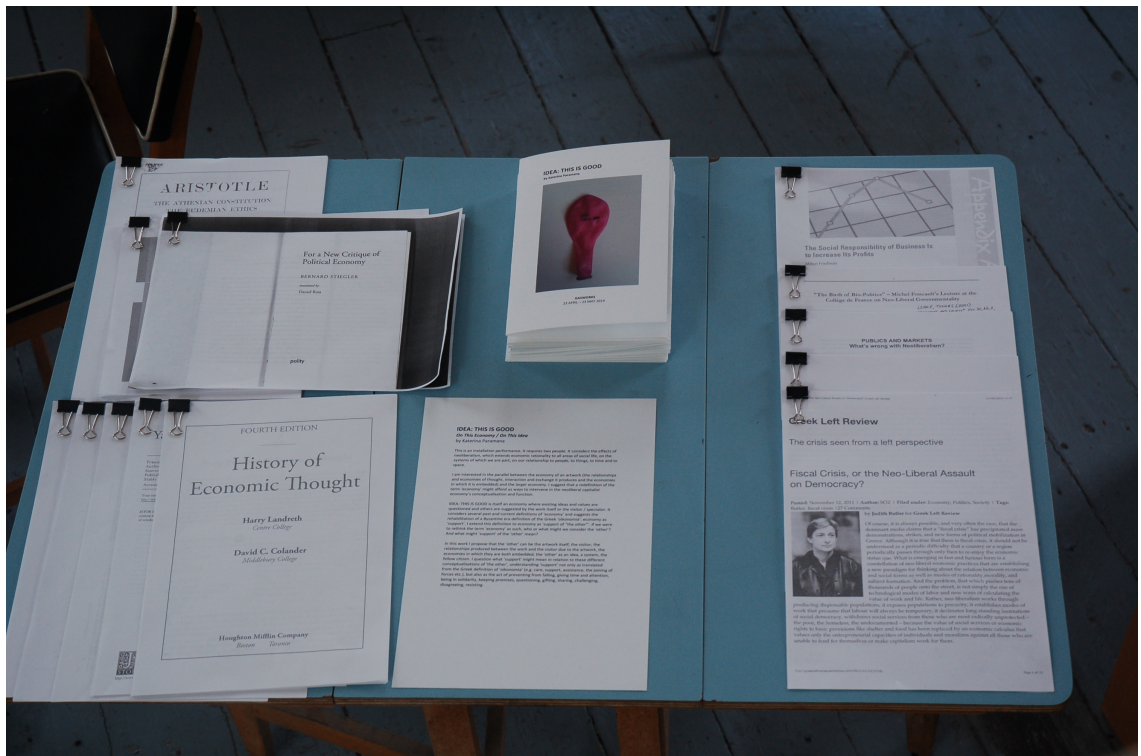


Photo by Katerina Paramana.



Photo by Katerina Paramana.

Guided by simple instructions, spectators engaged with the work through three tasks they performed together. First, they were asked to take turns climbing an unstable ladder (while the other supported it) to see the redefinition of economy on the shelf to the left and the definitions on the right. The second task involved their choosing to read parts of texts that in different ways supported the work: texts on economy from philosophers like Aristotle, Bernard Stiegler and Judith Butler, on the history of economic thought, texts by proponents of neoliberalism and an artist statement. The third and final task asked them, through a poem, to exchange ideas about the work's proposition ('economy is support of "the other"') and communicate their agreement or disagreement by using a balloon on which 'IDEA: THIS IS GOOD' was written. If they agreed with the proposition of the work, they were to inflate the balloon and either take it with them or leave it in the space. If they disagreed with the work's proposition, they were to inflate the balloon, burst it with one of the objects on the table and leave it in the space.



Photos by Katerina Paramana.



Photos by Katerina Paramana.



Photos by Katerina Paramana.

3. Reflections on the work

Although the work can be understood as participatory, it is not *about* participation. Rather, it is about the necessity for the spectators' engagement with the work in order for the work to exist at all: it requires two spectators to question existing ideas (those proposed by the work as well as those proposed by the current economy), negotiate their individual opinions of it, be social, work together, trust each other, make decisions, take positions in relation to the ideas proposed by the work and take action according to their position. Importantly, the work constantly points outside of itself: to the spectator, her role in the work and in the economy in

which both the work and the spectator are embedded and to her expectations of and desires for that economy.

Unlike Bel's work, *IDEA: THIS IS GOOD* is explicitly political. However, it is not an activist work. Although the work pressed on the sociality afforded by the gallery space and on neoliberalism's production of the social, it was nevertheless presented within an institution and in a quite conventional manner. Its concern was with questioning something we are familiar with – the definition and application of the term 'economy'. Equally important to the work, though, was that this redefinition was enacted in such a manner that it performed itself and therefore constructed a specific mode of sociality: a specific economy of relations within the work and with the economies in which the work was embedded. In relation to the economy of the *archive of destruction*, it questioned what form an act of destruction might take. In relation to both the gallery and the larger economy, it questioned the sociality they afford. Finally, from my observation of the performance of the work⁶⁹ with regards to the economies of relation it afforded, despite practical changes⁷⁰ that I made along the way, the work seemed to be enacting the redefinition and doing what it was constructed for: it created a space where two people had to work together, construct relationships amongst the elements of the installation and practice trust, collaboration, decision-making and creativity in the performance of the tasks. It created a space where the spectators had to 'support' the work and each other whether by agreeing or questioning and resisting the work and each other's opinion. The work also produced a level of what Gilbert (2014) might refer to as a 'shared joyous affect'. The balloon task –

⁶⁹ I was present in the gallery whenever spectators engaged with the work.

⁷⁰ For example, I improved the clarity of the instructions.

and the presence of the balloons itself – created a playful environment, where spectators seemed to enjoy engaging with (at least this part of) the work. Some spectators commented that the work's relative abstraction enabled several allusions in relation to its objects. For example, the uninflated balloons were seen both as the representation of the concept of the work as well as of the (deflated) current economy. Some spectators associated the ladder with the struggle of climbing the economic or social ladder. For others, the ladder represented the struggle, both literally and metaphorically, to approach a redefinition and a new understanding of economy or the reaching upwards, but also towards the past, in an attempt to approach such a redefinition.

However, despite the seeming 'success' of the work – its seeming to do what it was constructed to do – the question that keeps coming to my mind since the work's presentation is this: 'So what? What did this work actually do? Who actually 'saw' the work and how could a work like this effect any kind of change?' The narrative/argument this work, and this thesis, has proposed with regards to the kind of work that has the potential to effect change, is of work that creates and affords specific relations within itself and with the economies in which it is embedded: work that questions them and constructs a sociality that affords the creation of spaces of decision, affect and creative possibility; work that produces ethical encounters. But does this 'recipe' effect change? Is it enough?

With the exception of two construction workers, the work was only seen by other artists, curators and friends, who are also artists. Compared to that of Sehgal or Bel's work, its exposure was minimal. Its 'impact' therefore was also most likely minimal – and this is even assuming that the work's proposition was considered 'a

good idea'. Of course, the fact that it was presented in a low-profile institution, in an economy where *certain kinds* of people circulate, perhaps predetermined its effects. Could this kind of work be presented at Tate Modern? It could, assuming that I was a well-known artist. But even at Tate the audience is relatively specific. Could this kind of work be presented in a public space? In Trafalgar Square? Not in its current format, unless 'economy is support of the "other"' was attached as a neon sign, similar to those by Martin Creed or Tim Etchells, to the top of the building of the National Portrait Gallery. Although these are possible (and at the same time impossible) scenarios, I am more concerned with how *this kind* of work, presented in either low or high-profile institutions, can actually effect change. Perhaps, as I have already discussed with Sehgal and Bel's work, the manner in which this kind of work can effect change is through the relationships it creates within the work and the work with the economies in which it was embedded. Perhaps *IDEA: THIS IS GOOD* could imperceptibly effect change through the effect its proposition had on those who saw it. Can we think of 'economy' differently? Can we re-appropriate the term and use it positively so that our economy can function for the pursuit of justice? What actions would we have to take in order for such a proposition to materialise? Perhaps the work suggested to the artists who saw it a different way to engage with politics through an artwork – not necessarily a new way, but a different one. Therefore, perhaps, the work's efficacy lies in the thinking it affords and the practices it might influence.

These are a lot of 'perhapses' and 'mights'; and I cannot help thinking that this question of efficacy has already thrown me into a conversation that uses capitalist language: 'efficacy', 'impact' and the demand for quick, visible and concrete results. This kind of work does not make an impact in a quick, visible and concrete manner.

IDEA: THIS IS GOOD functions at a level of potentiality rather than at a level of actualisation.

I began this thesis with these questions: 'Can the kind of work contemporary artists Tino Sehgal, Jérôme Bel and I make and present in theatres and galleries effect change in the contemporary moment? Where might the potential to effect change in, what is referred to as 'neoliberal capitalism', be located? What kind of artwork has the potential to effect change?' My response to these questions is: it depends. *This kind* of work can effect change and should be made, if we think in certain terms. In terms, for example, of Arendt's belief in affecting 'further action' or in terms of the work's proposition: as 'supporting the "other"' by, at the same time, encouraging and affording agreement, disagreement, working together, collaborating, resisting, trusting, taking time, giving attention, making decisions and taking action. Or perhaps if we thought in terms of the importance of a work to create tension and question the relationship between art, politics, the social and ethics through – as I have been arguing throughout this thesis – the economy of relations it produces within itself and with the economies in which it is embedded. However, this simply cannot be *all* an artist does to effect change. And definitely not all she does *on her own*. Change requires the actions towards change by multiple actors who are part of multiple spheres and attempt through all the spheres they are part of (whether education, construction, art, science or any other sphere), individually and with others, to make it a reality. Effecting change requires much more than art and many more of us to accomplish it.

EPILOGUE

Looking Back

This thesis opened up, once again, a conversation about the role of art and the artist in relation to society within the current economy. It did so by attempting to reconfigure the relationship of art to politics, the social and ethics. In the introduction to the thesis, I discussed the particular motivations for this research project: the current crisis – both social and economic – in Europe and the US and the ‘misuse’ of postmodern ambiguity and relationality when it comes to everyday life. Aware of the problematic uses of the term ‘neoliberal capitalism’, I first traced its progression from a theory, to ideology, policy and governmental programme from modernity to the present day. I then presented the opinions of thinkers such as Slavoj Žižek (2010) and Jodi Dean (2012), who, although they generally agree on *what* needs to be done politically to effect change in our contemporary moment, they disagree on *how* to do this and the role that art can play in this *how*. I also discussed how different scholars and theorists have engaged with the debate on what socially engaged artwork means and how it might manifest. Like Jackson (2013), I expressed the belief that art can be both socially and aesthetically meaningful and that this is not contradictory. In addition, I agreed with Harvie (2013) with regards to the importance of social relations that artworks produce in the current neoliberal moment. However, I argued, and illustrated this point with the analysis of Bel’s work, that a work’s social engagement is not necessarily predicated on physical participation and that both the social relations artworks produce within themselves and within the several economies in which they are embedded are important: that a work’s social engagement and any potential to effect change outside the framework of the artwork lies in the *specific* economy of

relations it produces within itself (the sociality the work creates through its materiality, dramaturgy and relation to the spectator which depend on the 'house rules' of the artwork) and with the economies in which it is embedded (the manner it critically situates itself in relation to their place/space of presentation, the economies of dance/theatre/art and culture and the neoliberal capitalist economy). Furthermore, I pointed out that my perspective on this subject, unlike Bourriaud, Bishop, Jackson and Harvie, who are scholars, theorists and critics, is that of an artist making work and who has made work both in the US as well as in Europe. My perspective is that of an artist who wants to rethink and nuance for herself through her own work and by looking at that of other artists *how* a work may have the potential to effect change in the contemporary neoliberal moment.

I started with these questions: 'Can the kind of work contemporary artists Tino Sehgal, Jérôme Bel and I make and present in theatres and galleries effect change in the contemporary moment? Where can the potential to effect change in, what is referred as neoliberal capitalism, might be located? What kind of artwork has the potential to effect change?' The task identified was the need for a nuancing of the role that art can play in society through an examination of the specific economies of relation that artworks produce within themselves and with the economies in which they embedded. I examined such relationships through each of Sehgal's and Bel's work discussed in this thesis, as well as through the making of my own work.

Section I attempted to rethink the relationship between art, politics and the social within the current economy. It began with the 'Inter-Vention' 1: *Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality – A Lecture-Performance*, which presented the kind of thinking and making with which this project began: the

belief in the importance of systems in revealing the assumption upon which they are built (Kershaw, 2007), of questioning and examining the narratives by which we live and the importance of the relationship artworks create with economies inside and outside of them. It also presented the questions arising from my practice at the time, which later became the basis for this PhD project.

The subsequent two chapters examined the work of Tino Sehgal. Chapter 1 carried the questions that arose from 'Inter-Vention 1' forward, focusing on Sehgal's work *Ann Lee* (2011), which I encountered as a spectator. In this chapter, I examined the economy of relations of the work within the economies of the museum and neoliberal capitalism. I suggested that, despite Sehgal's claim to the 'immateriality' of his work, the work is in the end 'material', because it produces social relationships: material things that affect the way we think about and act in the world. I argued, however, that it is not only important that the work points to the importance of relationships, but that what is crucial is the *kind* of relationships that artworks produce.

In Chapter 2, then, I examined the kind of relations Sehgal's work *These Associations* (2012) produced both within and outside the work. I examined the economy of relations within the work and the relation of the work to the museum and neoliberal capitalism from my position as both a participant in and spectator of the work. I argued that the work's resistance to neoliberalism and its potential to effect change outside the frame of the artwork evaporated because the work, soon after its opening, ruptured the sociality upon which it and its philosophy were based. I suggested that the effect of this was a rupture of the promises that

the work made and therefore of trust, which in turn led to the rupture of its resistance to neoliberalism's production of the social.

Section I closed with *Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?* ('Inter-Vention' 2), which was created to address the issues I identified with Sehgal's work. It therefore created an economy of relations within the work – a sociality – that was based on trust and on a system that revealed its own construction and could be changed by the participants/spectators and questioned the function of the current economy. This work raised questions about the necessity of making activist or explicitly political work; questions about where the radicality and the potential of an artwork to effect change might lie; questions about the ethical position of the producer; and questions about what economy of relations within the artwork can effect change in our contemporary moment. It is these questions that I took into consideration in my discussion of Bel's work in Section II.

Like the previous section on Sehgal's work, Section II consisted of a discussion of two works by Jérôme Bel and two of my practice works ('Inter-Ventions' 4 and 5). However, because Section II's aim was to attempt to connect the relationship drawn in Section I between art, politics and the social within the current economy to *ethics*, I began with an 'inter-vention' of a different kind – a theoretical manoeuvre. Having observed how the economy of relations both in Sehgal's *These Associations* and my work *Talking with Strangers: What is violence?* affected each work's production of what I referred to as 'ethical encounters', in 'Inter-Vention' 3: *On Ethics and Economy*, I examined the connection between the terms 'economy' and 'ethics'. I suggested that the relationship between the two terms is concomitant and examined the changing ethics attached to 'economy' since the

term's inception in ancient Greece. Disagreeing with the ethics upon which the current economy is based, I suggested the redefinition of the term 'economy' itself. I drew on a definition of 'economy' from the Byzantine era and redefined 'economy' as 'support of "the other"' (where 'support' can also mean disagreement, questioning, resistance and so forth), pointing to an ethics of care, support and justice. I proposed that this redefinition might help us look at how artworks, as economies in themselves, can contribute to rethinking and intervening in the conceptualisation and function of the larger economy. It is with this redefinition in mind and the questions raised by Section I that I approached the work of Bel.

Chapter 3 introduced Bel's work by examining the ill-defined and contested economy of contemporary dance in which he makes work. I argued that Bel's work is most productively read through the lens of economy, for the term reveals most strikingly how elements in the work are layered, the work's production of economies of thought, interaction and encounter and how the work is complicit, resists or reveals the economies in which it is embedded: the theatre, contemporary dance and neoliberal capitalist economy.

Chapter 4 was comprised of three parts: the first looked at Bel's work *Veronique Doisneau* (2004), examining the economy of relations within the work and its relation to its context: the specific theatre and the contemporary dance and ballet economies. I argued that the work's importance lies in the affect it produces, which has the potential to affect further action and therefore effect change in the dance economy. The examination of *Veronique Doisneau*, as well as the making and presentation of my work *Martyro* ('Inter-Vention' 4), which was located within this chapter, pointed to how an artwork can critique the economy/space of its

presentation, but also the importance of affect as a way to empower bodies and affect further action. The second part of this chapter looked at Bel's *The Show Must Go On* (2001). I examined the sociality and affect afforded by the work through the economy of relations it produced within itself and with the theatre, dance and neoliberal economies. I argued that the work's potential emerged from its own construction and from the production of a sociality where promises made by the work were kept through the work's function as a system; where affect produced as a result of the meaning-making process and the space afforded for the spectator to intervene in the work contributed to a sense 'collective joy' which empowered spectators; and where the spectator's capacities were increased through the creation of 'spaces of decision', spaces where we realise that decisions are always a result of our relation to multiple others. In the third part of Chapter 4, with my redefinition of 'economy' in mind, I questioned Bel's role as a producer in neoliberal capitalism and argued that his work resists this economy and 'supports "the other"' through the manner it produces the social, which in turn produces *ethical encounters*. By an ethical encounter I referred to a Levinasian encounter that recognises fully the alterity of the other and the ethical responsibility towards her in non-reciprocal terms (Levinas, 1969), but which also recognises that, although this distance to the other(s) exists, the other(s) is(are) connected to the 'I' by relations to the world, by an inescapable and always present sociality. Through a comparison of the space of the theatre to that of the museum, I also argued that the theatre, when critiqued in the manner of Bel, is an important place of presentation in our contemporary moment due its specific conditions of time and space and therefore the thinking and sociality it affords. I suggested that Bel proposes a practice of thinking, relation and action that democratic institutions should be informed by, enable and repeat.

The creation of *IDEA: THIS IS GOOD* ('Inter-Vention' 5), the last work as part of this research project, took into consideration the conclusions drawn from Bel's work and the thinking, making and writing until that point in the thesis. Using the redefinition of economy as 'support of "the other"', I attempted to create in the space of the gallery conditions similar to that of the theatre and a space of decision, affect and creative possibility: a space of 'joyous affect', one where spectators supported each other and the work by engaging with it and therefore enabling to perform itself and one where they needed to work together in time and space, trust one another, question the ideas and values proposed by the artwork, make decisions and act on them.

My response to the thesis's initial questions – 'Can the kind of work contemporary artists Tino Sehgal, Jérôme Bel and I make and present in theatres and galleries effect change in the contemporary moment? Where might the potential to effect change in, what is referred to as 'neoliberal capitalism', be located? What kind of artwork has the potential to effect change?' – was that the kind of work Tino Sehgal, Jérôme Bel and I make and present in theatres and galleries can effect change in the contemporary moment when the economy of relations they produce within the artwork and with the economies in which are embedded create tension between art, politics, the social and ethics by 'supporting the "other"': by questioning their role in these economies and by producing spaces of joyous affect and a sociality that encourages and affords agreement, disagreement, working together, collaborating, resisting, trusting, taking time, giving attention, being creative, making decisions and acting upon them. However, I also emphasised that change requires the actions towards change by multiple actors who are part of

multiple spheres and attempt through all the spheres of which they are a part, individually and with others, to make it a reality. Effecting change requires much more than art and many more of us to accomplish it.

Looking Forward

Slavoj Žižek argues that ‘the economy is always a *political* economy, a site of political struggle’ (2010, p. 183). I suggest that the economy is not only ‘always a *political* economy’ but it is also always an *ethical* economy – a site where the *kind* of ethics by which an economy functions are revealed and where different sets of ethics can clash, a site of ethical struggle. I therefore consider it important that, if artists are to engage with the political of the current economy, they need to first and foremost engage with the ethical. The engagement with the ethical that I propose draws on the redefinition of ‘economy as support of “the other”’ as articulated in this thesis: as creating a mode of sociality that creates spaces of decision, affect and creative possibility, affording an ethical encounter. Art then needs to, simultaneously with all other spheres, support an effort towards *justice* in the *Polis* through its production of relations, through its production of ethical encounters.

Žižek also believes that if we are to actively fight for change, we need first and foremost to question and critique our dreams for ourselves and for the future and the actions we take towards that direction (2010, pp. 400-401). I suggest that the question we need to ask then is this: what dreams do we have about the future and our ethics of relation? How do we want to be supported and think we need to support others? This is the question perhaps we need to

answer and negotiate, make decisions, organise and act; through art and any other sphere we support by our relation to it.

Fading to Black

I am sitting by the window smoking – again. Today is the 27 January 2015. Two days ago the left wing party SYRIZA won the elections in Greece. It was not a ‘clean’ victory – it had to form a coalition with a right wing party. Desperate times, desperate measures. Golden Dawn is still the third party in parliament.

However, the victory of a left wing party in Greece, in Europe for that matter, is no small feat. It was austerity that pushed citizens to take a leap of faith. Although austerity played a big role in SYRIZA’s victory, what made it possible were small acts. I am not only referring to SYRIZA activists’ going to remote villages and listening to the needs of and helping farmers and collecting food for the poor and homeless (Golden Dawn also did the latter, but not for immigrants). I am also talking about all the conversations that took place among friends, families and strangers about issues that are important (about ‘hot tub’ issues as Sennett (2012) would call them), about philosophers’ engagement with what is happening, about the artworks that were made during this period in Greece and elsewhere, making people think, discuss and change their every day practices.

In this moment, we need to trust that promises made will be kept. Let’s all hope, and put some faith in this effort for change; for another Europe, for a different relation to one another in the world. In the end it is all about faith: believing first of all that you can change things and acting on this belief. Why is this still perceived to be romantic? (Does not the stock market work on faith?) Perhaps we need to see

change as predicated on the belief that we can change things, on trust of each other, on working together, on continual efforts and engagement with problems. It seems that we need someone to remind us this. Art not only reminds us of this, but also imagines new worlds and pokes us into action. It is time to start acting.

House lights up.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 (in DVD)

Muddle Muddle Toil and Trouble: Disorder and Potentiality – A Lecture Performance

- A) Video of my Introduction
- B) Powerpoint of images and sounds accompanying text read by the performers.
- C) Text read by the performers
- D) System for the Retrieval of Texts

APPENDIX 2 (in DVD)

Talking with Strangers: What is Violence?

- Photos of each installation object and Email Chains with Participants

APPENDIX 3 (in DVD)

Martyro

- Sound played at the beginning of the performance

APPENDIX 4 (in DVD)

IDEA: THIS IS GOOD

- The texts by other authors physically present in the work on 'economy's origin, history and theory.

APPENDIX 5

Ethical Approval

The research for this project was submitted for ethics consideration under the reference DTP 11/ 007 in the Department of Drama, Theatre and Performance and was approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee on 24 January 2012.

Sample Consent Form



ETHICS COMMITTEE

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project:

Object Making, Meaning Making: The construction of Meaning and Value in Postmodern Performance and Choreographic Practices

Brief Description of Research Project:

My practice often involves the participation of fellow-artists as performers in my work. This participation presumes the understanding by the performers that their role is limited to that of the performer - carrying out the ideas of the work - and that their contribution will not make them eligible to consider the work their own.

The rehearsal process will consist of the devising of movement and task-based material that will then be organized into a performance. The devising of this material will be the result of the translation - by myself and the performers - of the questions and the concept that I will provide for each work into practical explorations. The performers and myself will then develop these practical explorations into performance tasks. The performers will then rehearse the material that I have decided to be included in the performance and which they will perform in front of an audience. I will not put the performers at any physical or emotional risk during the rehearsal or performance process. No personal information exchanged during rehearsal or presentation periods will be utilized as part of this research project.

The rehearsals will be taking place in the Drama and Dance Departments' (I am co-supervised by the Dance Department) studio and theatre spaces. The duration of rehearsals (how many hours per week) will be set according to the needs of every project and the availability of the performers. The number of rehearsal hours per week

could vary (from i.e. two to eight hours) depending on the length of the rehearsal process for each project.

The performers will be performing in my work publicly. This is one of the main ways that the participants will benefit from their participation in my work – they will be exposed as performers to different audiences, including future choreographers that may want to work with them. This presupposes that their anonymity will not be maintained. Written consent for this is acquired through this Participant Consent Form.

It is important for this research project that some rehearsals (for reflection and consideration of the material devised) and all performances (to be included in my final thesis document) are recorded. Permission from the participants to be filmed and/or photographed during rehearsal and performances of my work is requested through this form, together with information that consent for the use of such film and/or photos may be withdrawn at any time. The audiovisual documentation of the practice-as-research rehearsal and performances will be stored on my personal computer which is password protected and kept safely at home. When such materials are copied to disc they will be kept under lock and key in my home.

No payment will be made to the performers for their participation, but I will reimburse any travel expenses for performances.

Written permissions for use of any non- Drama / Dance Department (external) spaces (i.e. for performance installations), together with any relevant Health and Safety documentation from the organization will be obtained and lodged with the original Ethics application as required for any future project.

Investigator Contact Details:

Name Katerina Paramana
Department Drama, Theatre & Performance Studies
University address
Roehampton University
Digby Stuart College
Roehampton Lane
London
Postcode SW15 5PH
Email paramana@roehampton.ac.uk
Telephone 079-8309-9088

Consent Statement:

I agree to take part in this research project as described above and I understand that:

- the Investigator, Katerina Paramana, retains all the rights and artistic ownership of this and any future work that is part of this research project and in which I participate as a performer. I am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point.
- no personal information exchanged during rehearsal and presentation periods will be utilized as part of this research project, but my anonymity will not be maintained.
- some rehearsals and all performances will be filmed and or photographed as part of this research project. Consent for the use of such film and/or photos may be withdrawn at any time.
- I will not be paid for my participation, but I will be reimbursed for any travel expenses for performances.

Name (Performer in the presentation of my practice).....

Signature

Date

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator. However, if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Chair of the Department's Research Students Co-ordinating Group (or if the researcher is a student you can also contact the Director of Studies/ Head of Department.)

**Chair of the Department's Research
Students Co-ordinating Group
Contact Details:**

Name: Dr Sarah Gorman
University Address:
Roehampton University
Digby Stuart College
Roehampton Lane
London SW15 5PH
Email: s.gorman@roehampton.ac.uk
Telephone: 0208-392-3776

**Head of Department / Director of
Studies Contact Details:**

Name: Professor Joe Kelleher
University Address:
Roehampton University
Digby Stuart College
Roehampton Lane
London SW15 5PH
Email: j.kelleher@roehampton.ac.uk
Telephone: 0208-392-3708

BIBLIOGRAPHY

*(Reference List according to Harvard Referencing system
with full first name of author)*

Acocella, Nicola, Benyik, Matyas & Cacinovi, Nadezda et al. (2015) Europe looks to Syriza for hope of change. *The Guardian*. [Online] 11th January. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/11/europe-looks-syriza-hope-change> [Accessed 11th January 2015].

activate. (2010) *cfp – 'On the Paper Floor: Exploring writing practices' (winter 2010)*. [Online] Available from: http://www.thisisactivate.net/thisisac_roeham/cfp-on-the-paper-floor-exploring-writing-practices/ [Accessed 24th November 2014].

Adolphe, Jean-Marc. (1994) A dance of disaster. *Ballett International Tanz Aktuell*, 94 (4), 10.

Adolphe, Jean-Marc. (1993) The beginnings of a 'new wave'. *Ballett International Tanz Aktuell*, 93 (4), 29–31.

Adorno, Theodor W. (2004) *Aesthetic Theory*. London, Bloomsbury.

Adorno, Theodor W. (1976). *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*. London, Continuum.

Agamben, Giorgio. (16th November 2013). *From the State of Control to a Praxis of Destituent Power*. Transcript of the public lecture delivered in Athens, Greece published on 4th February 2014. [Online] Available from: <http://www.chronosmag.eu/index.php/g-agamben-for-a-theory-of-destituent-power.html> [Accessed 2nd November 2014].

Agamben, Giorgio. (2000) *Means without End: Notes on Politics*. Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press.

Arendt, Hannah. ([1958]1998) *The Human Condition*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

Aristotle. (1999) *Politics*. Kitchener, Batoche Books.

Aristotle. (1935) *The Athenian Constitution. The Eudemian Ethics. Virtues and Vices*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

Arvidsson, Adam. (2006) *Brands: Meaning and Value in Media Culture*. Oxon, Routledge.

Auslander, Philip. (1999). *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. London, Routledge.

Auslander, Philip. (1988) Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance by Susan Leigh Foster – Review. *TDR*, 32 (4), 7–23.

Aviv, Rachel. (2014) Wrong answer: In an era of high-stakes testing, a struggling school made a shocking choice. *The New Yorker*. [Online] 21st July. Available from: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/07/21/wrong-answer> [Accessed 20th November 2014].

Backhouse, Roger E., & Medema, Steven. (2009) Retrospectives: On the definition of economics. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. [Online] 23 (1), 221-233. Available from: <http://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/jep.23.1.221> [Accessed 5th August 2014].

Baloglou, Christos. P. (2012) The tradition of economic thought in the Mediterranean world from the ancient classical times through the Hellenistic times until the Byzantine times and Arab-Islamic world. In: Backhaus, Jürgen Georg (ed.) *Handbook of history of economic thought: Insights on the Founders of modern economics*. New York, Springer, pp. 7–91.

Banes, Sally. ([1980] 1987) *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance*. Middletown, Wesleyan University Press.

Bauer, Una. (2008a) The movement of embodied thought. The representational game of the stage zero of signification in Jérôme Bel. *Performance Research*, 13 (1), 35–41.

Bauer, Una. (2008b) Jérôme Bel: An interview. *Performance Research*, 13 (1), 42–48.

Barish, Jonas. (1981) *The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice*. Berkeley, University of California Press.

Barnett, Clive (2010). Publics and markets: What's wrong with neoliberalism?. In: Smith, Susan J., Pain, Rachel, Marston, Sallie A. & Jones III, John Paul (eds.) *The sage handbook of social geographies*. London, Sage, pp. 269–296.

Barthes, Roland. (2009) *Mythologies*. London, Vintage.

Barthes, Roland. (2006) The death of the author. In: Bishop, Claire (ed.) *Participation: Documents of contemporary art*. London, Whitechapel Gallery, pp. 41–45.

Barthes, Roland. (1977) *Image Music Text*. London, Fontana Press.

Baudrillard, Jean. (2005) *The System of Objects*. London, Verso.

Bel, Jérôme & Wood, Catherine. (2013) Frieze Talks: Jérôme Bel in conversation with Catherine Wood. *Frieze London*. 20 October, London.

Bel, Jérôme & Goldberg, RoseLee. (2012) Why dance in the art world? Jérôme Bel and RoseLee Goldberg in conversation. *Performa Magazine*. [Online] Available from: <http://performa-arts.org/magazine/entry/why-dance-in-the-art-world->

jerome-bel-and-roselee-goldberg-in-conversation [Accessed 24th November 2014].

Bel, Jérôme. (2012) BMW Tate Live: Jérôme Bel - Performance Room. *YouTube*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0TmUQmKpDg> [Accessed 5th October 2013].

Bel, Jérôme. (2006-2010) *RB jerome bel*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.jeromebel.fr/eng/index.asp> [Accessed 5th October 2013].

Bel, Jérôme & Buren, Daniel. (2008) Conversation Daniel Buren with Jérôme Bel. *RB jerome bel*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.jeromebel.fr/textsandinterviews/detail/?textInter=miscellaneous%20-%20daniel%20buren> [Accessed 5 September 2014].

Bel, Jérôme. (2008) *Showtime: Jérôme Bel 1994-2005*. [Q & A session following the retrospective] London, Sadler's Wells Theatre.

Bel, Jérôme & Klunchen, Pichet. (2006) *Pichet Klunchen and Myself*. [DVD] Taipei Novel Hall, Jérôme Bel: Novel Dance.

Bel, Jérôme. (2005) Veronique Doisneau. *YouTube*. [Online] Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OluWY5PInFs> [Accessed 25th May 2012].

Bel, Jérôme, La Ribot, Maria, Le Roy, Xavier & Wavelet, Christophe. (2002) Manifesto for an European performance policy. *Freie Theater*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.freitheater.at/?page=kulturpolitik&detail=61304&jahr=2002> [Accessed 5 September 2014].

Bel, Jérôme. (2001) *The Show Must Go On*. [DVD] Lee, Aldo (film) Teatro Nacional San Joao, Porto (Portugal), Association R. B. Jérôme Bel.

Benjamin, Walter. (1978) *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*. New York, Schocken Books.

Bennett, Tony. (1995). *The Birth of the Museum*. London, Routledge.

Benveniste, Émile. (1996) The nature of the linguistic sign. In: Cobley, Paul (ed.) *The communication theory reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 63-69.

Berardi, Franco Bifo. (2013) TedxCalarts: Performance, Body & Presence. [Online Live Stream Lecture], 9th March. Available from: <http://new.livestream.com/tedx/tedxcalarats> [Accessed 9 March 2013].

Berardi, Franco Bifo. (2012) *The Uprising: On Poetry and Finance*. Los Angeles, Semiotext(e).

Berardi, Franco Bifo. (2011) Time, acceleration, and violence. *e-flux*, 27 [Online] Available from: <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/time-acceleration-and-violence/> [Accessed 23rd May 2012].

Bishop, Claire. (2012a) In the age of the cultural Olympiad, we're all public performers. *The Guardian*. [Online] 23rd July. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jul/23/cultural-olympiad-public-performers?uni=Article:in%20body%20link> [Accessed 21st August 2014].

Bishop, Claire. (2012b) *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. London, Verso.

Bishop, Claire. (2009) Deskillling Dance – Showtime: Jérôme Bel 1994-2005. *RB jerome bel*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.jeromebel.fr/textsandinterviews/detail/?textInter=miscellaneous%20-%20claire%20bishop> [Accessed 5th September 2014].

Bishop, Claire. (2006) The social turn: Collaboration and its discontents. *Artforum*, 44 (February), 178-183.

Bishop, Claire. (2005) No pictures, please: Claire Bishop on the art of Tino Sehgal. *Artforum*, 43 (May), 215–217.

Bishop, Claire. (2004) Antagonism and relational aesthetics. *October*, 110, 51–79.

Boal, Augusto. ([1974] 2008) *Theatre of the Oppressed*. London, Pluto Press.

Boettke, Peter J. (2014) Economic systems – Preconditions for market society. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.Britannica.Com/Ebchecked/Topic/178493/Economic-Systems/61116/Preconditions-For-Market-Society> [Accessed 13th November 2014].

Bolton, Matt. (2013). Is art to blame for gentrification? Change in inner-city areas such as Peckham has been fuelled by the 'cultural creatives' but it is art itself that offers hope of resistance. *The Guardian*. [Online] 30th August. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/aug/30/art-blame-gentrification-peckham> [Accessed 22nd November 2014].

Bourdieu, Pierre. (1993) *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London, Routledge.

Bourriaud, Nicolas. ([1998] 2006) Relational aesthetics. In: Bishop, Claire (ed.) *Participation: Documents of contemporary art*. London, Whitechapel Gallery, pp. 160–170.

Bourriaud, Nicolas. ([1998] 2002) *Relational Aesthetics*. Paris, Presses du reel.

Braudel, Fernand. (1979) *The Wheels of Commerce: Civilization and Capitalism 15th–18th Century*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Brecht, Bertolt. ([1949] 1964) A short organum for the theatre. In: Willett, John (ed.) *Brecht on theatre: The development of an aesthetic*. London, Methuen, pp. 179–205.

Brown, Wendy. (2015) *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. New York, Zone Books.

Buffard, Alain & Le Roy, Xavier. (1999) The Last Performance - Alain Buffard and Xavier Le Roy. *RB jerome bel*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.jeromebel.fr/textsandinterviews/detail/?textInter=the%20last%20performance%20-%20alain%20buffard%20and%20xavier%20le%20roy> [Accessed 5 September 2014].

Burt, Ramsay. ([2009] 2011) Jérôme Bel. In: Bremser, Martha (ed.) *Fifty contemporary choreographers*. New York, Routledge, pp. 42–48.

Burt, Ramsay. (2009) What the dancing body can do: Spinoza and the ethics of experimental theatre dance. In: Ramsay, Burt & Briginshaw, Valerie A. (eds.) *Writing dancing together*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 204–216.

Butler, Judith. (2011) Fiscal Crisis or the Neo-Liberal Assault on Democracy? *Greek Left Review*. [Online] 12th November. Available from: <http://greekleftreview.wordpress.com/2011/11/12/1718/> [Accessed 24th November 2014].

Butler, Judith. (1993) *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. New York, Routledge.

Cannetti, Elias. (1962) *Crowds and Power*. London: Phoenix.

Carlson, Marvin. (1989) *Places of Performance: The semiotics of theatre architecture*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

Clapp, Susannah. (2010) The 10 best Hamlets. *The Observer*. [Online] 22nd August. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2010/aug/22/10-best-hamlets-david-tennant> [Accessed 15 November 2014].

Clayton, Michelle, Franko, Mark, George-Graves, Nadine, Lepecki, André, Manning, Susan, Ross, Janice, Schneider, Rebecca, Solomon, Noémie & Miller, Stefanie. (2013) Inside/Beside dance studies: A conversation Mellon dance studies in/and the humanities. *Dance Research Journal*, 45 (3), 3–28.

Collins French-English Dictionary. (2014) 'spectacle'. [Online] Available from: <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/french-english/spectacle?showCookiePolicy=true> [Accessed 24 November 2014].

Cotter, Holland. (2010) In the naked museum: Talking, thinking, encountering. *New York Times*. [Online] 31st January. Available from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/01/arts/design/01tino.html?pagewanted=all> [Accessed 1st September 2011].

Cumming, Laura. (2012) Tino Sehgal: These Associations – Review. *The Guardian*. [Online] 29th July. Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2012/jul/29/tino-sehgal-these-associations-review> [Accessed 1st September 2012].

Cvejič, Boyana, Le Roy, Xavier & Siegmund, Gerald. (2006) To end with judgment by way of clarification. In: Hochmuth, Martina, Kruschkova, Krassimira & Schollhammer, Georg (eds.) *It takes place when it doesn't. On dance and performance*. Frankfurt, Revolver, pp. 49–58.

D' Amelio, Tony. (2008) On the premises of French cotemporary dance: Concepts, collectivity and 'Trojan horses' in the work of Jérôme Bel and Loïc Touzé. In: Lansdale, Janet (ed.) *Decentring dancing texts: The challenge of interpreting dances*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 89–105.

Dean, Jodi. (2013) Collective desire and the pathology of the individual. In: De Boever, Arne & Neidich, Warren (eds.) *The psychopathologies of cognitive capitalism: Part one*. Berlin, Archive Books, pp. 69–87.

Dean, Jodi. (2012) *The Communist Horizon*. London, Verso.

Debord, Guy. ([1967] 1997) *The Society of the Spectacle*. London, Rebel Press.

Deleuze, Gilles & Guattari, Félix. (1988) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London, Athlone Press.

Derrida, Jacques. (2001) *Writing and Difference*. Oxon, Routledge.

Derrida, Jacques. (1997) *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press.

Derrida, Jacques. (1988) *Limited Inc*. Evanston, IL, Northwestern University Press.

Elder-Vass, Dave. (2010) *The Causal Power of Social Structures: Emergence, Structure and Agency*. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Etchells, Tim. (2004) More and more clever watching more and more stupid. In: Heathfield, Adrian (ed.) *Live: Art and performance*. London, Tate Publishing, pp. 196–199.

Fabius, Jeroen. (2012) The missing history of (not)conceptual dance. In: Heering, Merel, Naber, Ruth, Nieuwboer, Bianca & Wildschut, Liesbeth (eds.) *Danswetenschap in Nederland*, deel (part) 7. Amsterdam, Vereniging voor Dansonderzoek (Association for Dance Research). [Online] Available from: http://www.academia.edu/4060526/J._Fabius._The_missing_history_of_not_conceptual_dance._In_Merel_Heering_Ruth_Naber_Bianca_Nieuwboer_en_Liesbeth_Wildschut.Danswetenschap_in_Nederland_deel_7._Amsterdam_Vereniging_voor_Dansonderzoek_2012 [Accessed 20th October 2014].

Farinati, Lucia. (2005) Tino Sehgal. *Audio Arts Magazine*, 23 (4) and 24 (1). London, Tate Publishing. [Online] Available from: <http://www.tate.org.uk/audio-arts/volume-23-24/number-4-1> [Accessed 17th March 2012].

Földenyi, Laszlo. (2006) Melancholy and abstraction. *signandsight.com*. [Online] 12th April. Available from: <http://print.signandsight.com/features/710.html> [Accessed 17th March 2012].

Foster, Susan. (1985) The signifying body: Reaction and resistance in postmodern dance. *Theatre Journal*, 37 (1), 44–64.

Foucault, Michel. (2009) *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, Michel. (2008) *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, Michel. (2003). *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*. New York, St. Martin's Press.

Foucault, Michel. (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York, Pantheon Books.

Franko, Mark. (2002) *The Work of Dance: Labor, movement and identity in the 1930s*. Middletown, CT, Wesleyan University Press.

Franko, Mark. (1995) *Dancing Modernism/Performing Politics*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

Freie Theatre. (2008) *Manifest: an die Europäische Kommission und deren Kulturpolitische Vertreter/innen*. [Online]. Available from: http://www.freietheater.at/?page=kulturpolitik&detail=61304&jahr=2002&id_language=2 [Accessed 5th October 2014].

Frenzel, Sebastian (2005) 'Ceci n'est pas le vide' An encounter with the artist of transience. *signandsight.com*. [Online] 9th June. Available from: <http://www.signandsight.com/features203.html> [Accessed 1st September 2011].

Friedman, Milton (1962) *Price Theory: A provisional text*. Chicago, Aldine.

Friedman, Milton. (1953) The Methodology of Positive Economics. In: Milton Friedman (ed.) *Essays in positive economics*. Chicago, Chicago University Press.

Gauthier, François, Martikainen, Tuomas & Woodhead, Linda. (2013) Introduction: Religion in Market Society. In: Gauthier, François and Martikainen, Tuomas (eds.) *Religion in the neoliberal age: Political economy and modes of governance*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, pp. 1-18.

Gasworks Gallery. (2014) [Online] Available from: <http://www.gasworks.org.uk> [Accessed 24th November 2014].

Giddens, Anthony. (2009 [1990]) *The Consequence of Modernity*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Gielen, Pascal. (2012) *Untitled (Labour): Contemporary art and immaterial production* [Symposium Panel discussion]. Clore Auditorium, Tate Britain, London, 17 March.

Gilbert, Jeremy. (2014) *Common Ground: Democracy and Collectivity in an Age of Individualism*. London, Pluto Press.

Gilbert, Jeremy. (2013) What kind of thing is 'neoliberalism'? *New Formations: A Journal of Culture, Theory and Politics*, 80–1, 7–22.

Gilbert, Alan. (2007) The talking lure. *Villagevoice*. [Online] 4th December. Available from: <http://www.villagevoice.com/content/printVersion/212022/> [Accessed 22nd January 2012].

Graeber, David. (2014) Occupy Democracy is not considered newsworthy. It should be. *The Guardian*. [Online] 27th October. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/oct/27/occupy-democracy-london-parliament-square> [Accessed 27th October 2014].

Graeber, David. (2008) The sadness of post-workerism or 'Art and immaterial labour' conference: A sort of review. *The Commoner: A Web Journal for Other Values*. [Online] 1st April. Available from: <http://www.commoner.org.uk/?p=33> [Accessed 29th April 2012].

Greenberg, Clement. (1973) Modernist painting. In: Battcock, Gregory (ed.) *The new art: A critical anthology*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., pp. 68–69.

Groys, Boris. (2010) *Going Public*. New York, Sternberg Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. (2013) *Democracy, solidarity and the European crisis*. [Lecture] Leuven, 26th April. [Online] Available from: <http://www.kuleuven.be/communicatie/evenementen/evenementen/jurgen-habermas/en/democracy-solidarity-and-the-european-crisis> [Accessed 30th May 2014].

Hall, Stuart. (1991) Old and new identities: Old and new ethnicities. In: King, Anthony D. (ed.) *Culture, globalisation and the world-system*. London, Macmillan, pp. 41–68.

Hancox, Dan (2014). The corny videos that London's property development sharks don't want you to see. *Vice*. [Online] 10th December. Available from: http://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/london-regeneration-videos-dan-hancox-374 [Accessed 12th December 2014].

Hantelmann, Dorothea von. (2010) *How to Do Things with Art: The Meaning of Art's Performativity*. Zurich, JRP / Ringier Kunstverlag AG and Les Presses du Réel.

- Hantelmann, Dorothea von & Jongbloed, Marjorie. (2002) *I Promise it's Political: Performativity in Art*. Cologne, Museum Ludwig.
- Hardt, Michael & Negri, Antonio. (2009) *Commonwealth*. Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press.
- Hardt, Michael & Negri, Antonio. (2004) *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York, The Penguin Press.
- Harney, Stefano. (2009) Extreme neo-liberalism: An introduction. *ephemera: theory and politics in organisation*, 9 (4), 318-329.
- Harvey, David. (2010) *The Enigma of Capital and the Crisis of Capitalism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, David. (2005) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Harvie, Jen. (2013) *Fair Play: Art, Performance and Neoliberalism*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hassan, Genevieve. (2012) Tino Sehgal takes over Tate Modern Turbine Hall. *BBC News*. [Online] 23th July. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-18957938> [Accessed 9th September 2014].
- Hawkins, Gay. (2006) *The Ethics of Waste: How we Relate to Rubbish*. Lanham MD, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Hawkins, Gay & Muecke, Stephen (eds.). (2003) *Culture and Waste: The Creation and Destruction of Value*. Lanham MD, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Heathfield, Adrian. (2011) *Practice-as Research*. [Seminar] University of Roehampton, London, 15 February.
- Heidegger, Martin. (1966 [1959]) *Discourse on Thinking*. New York, NY, Harper & Row.
- Heiser, Jörg. (2004) This is Jörg Heiser on Tino Sehgal. *Frieze Magazine*. [Online] 2 April. Available from: http://www.frieze.com/issue/print_article/this_is_joerg_heiser_on_tino_sehgal/ [Accessed 22nd January 2012].
- Hoffbauer, Patricia. (2014) Thinking and writing about bodies. *PAJ*, 36 (3), 34–40.
- Hohenadel, Kristin. (2005) Nondances that spur critics to brawl and audiences to sue. *The New York Times*. [Online] 20th March. Available from: http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/20/arts/dance/20hohe.html?_r=0 [Accessed 25th September 2014].
- Horwitz ,Andy. (2011) Visual art performance vs. contemporary performance.

Culturebot. [Online] 25th November. Available from: <http://www.culturebot.org/2011/11/11663/visual-art-performance-vs-contemporary-performance/> [Accessed 30th November 2014].

Huyghe, Pierre. (2001) One million kingdoms. *YouTube*. [Online] Available from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_XLxl4dKX3o and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcaJeRRSces&feature=related> [Accessed 25th May 2012].

Huyghe, Pierre. (2007) Anlee. *artbabble*. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.artbabble.org/video/art21/pierre-huyghe-anlee> [Accessed 12th March 2012].

Inman, Phillip. (2014) Angela Merkel scolds Italy and France over the faltering eurozone recovery. *The Guardian*. [Online] 20 August. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/aug/20/angela-merkel-scolds-italy-france-eurozone-faltering-growth> [Accessed 20th August 2014].

Institute for Live Arts Research. (2011) *Symposium Theme*. [Online] Available from: <http://liveartsinstitute.wordpress.com/symposiumsconferences/communication-of-crisis/symposium-theme/> [Accessed 24 November 2014].

Jack, Ian. (2015). How Deptford became the 'apex of fashionability' and other stories:

South-east London is next on the property developers' hit list – and another characterful neighbourhood is promised rebirth. Is there an alternative? *The Guardian*. [Online] 2 January. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jan/02/deptford-apex-of-fashionability> [Accessed 2nd January 2015].

Jackson, Shannon. (2012) *Performance and the aesthetics of precarity*. [Lecture] Queen Mary, University of London, 27 March.

Jackson, Shannon. (2011) *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics*. Oxon, Routledge.

Johnson, Dominique. (2005) Geometries of trust: Some thoughts on Manuel Vason and photographic conditions of performance. *Dance Theatre Journal*, 20 (4), 12–19.

Joselit, David. (2009) Institutional responsibility: The short life of Orchard. *Grey Room*, 35, 108–115.

Joseph, Miranda. (2002) *Against the Romance of Community*. Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press.

Kelleher, Joe. (2013) *Theatre & Politics*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Kershaw, Baz. (2007) *Theatre Ecology: Environments and Performance Events*. Cambridge, MA, Cambridge University Press.

Kolb, Alexandra. (2013) Current trends in contemporary choreography: A political

critique. *Dance Research Journal*, 45 (3), 29-52.

Kriaras, Emmanuel. (2014) Οικονομία [Economy]. *Pili gia tin Elliniki Glossa [Gate for the Greek Language]*. [Online] Available from: http://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/modern_greek/tools/lexica/search.html?q=οικονομία&dq= [Accessed 24th November 2014].

Kunsthalle Zurich Press Release. (2002) *No ghost just a shell*. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.mmparis.com/noghost.html> [Accessed 17th March 2012].

Lagoa, Pedro. (2013) *The archive of destruction*. [Online] Available from: <http://archiveofdestructionabout.blogspot.pt>
<http://arch-destr-londonbranch.blogspot.co.uk> [Accessed 20th November 2014].

Landreth, Harry & Colander, David C.. (2001) *History of Economic Thought*. Boston, MA, Houghton Mifflin.

Latour, Bruno. (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Latour, Bruno. (2004) *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

Lehmann, Hans-Thies. (2006) *Post-Dramatic Theatre*. London, Routledge.

Lemke, Thomas. (2001) The birth of bio-politics: Michael Foucault's lectures at the College de France on neo-liberal governmentality. *Economy and Society*, 30 (2), 190–207.

Lepecki, André. (2006) *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement*. London, Routledge.

Lepecki, André. (2004a) Concept and presence: The contemporary European dance scene. In: Carter, Alexandra (ed.) *Rethinking dance history. A reader*. London, Routledge, pp. 170–181.

Lepecki, André. (2004b). *Of the Presence of the Body: Essays on Dance and Performance Theory*. Middletown, CT, Wesleyan University Press.

Levinas, Emmanuel. (1969). *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press.

Libistros and Rhodamne. (1935) (Scaligeranus) 55 (Leiden), early 16th century, *Λίβ. (Lamb.) N, Esc., Sc.: J.A. Lambert, *Le roman de Libistros et Rhodamné*, Amsterdam.

Live Art Development Agency. (2014) *What is Live Art?* [Online] Available from: <http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/about/what-is-live-art/> [Accessed 24th November 2014].

Lubow, Arthur. (2012) Welcome to this situation... *Tate etc.*, 25, 27-29.

Lubow, Arthur. (2010) Making art out of an encounter. *New York Times*. [Online] 15th January. Available from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/17/magazine/17seghal-t.html?ref=design> [Accessed 1st September 2011].

Luke, Ben. (2012) Tino Sehgal: The talk show host at the Tate Modern. *London Evening Standard*. [Online] 31st July. Available from: <http://www.standard.co.uk/goingout/exhibitions/tino-sehgal-the-talk-show-host-at-the-tate-modern-7994219.html> [Accessed 9th September 2014].

Mackrell, Judith. (1991) Post-modern dance in Britain: An historical essay. *Dance Research*, 9 (1), 40–57.

Marx, Karl. ([1818–1883]1906–1909) *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (3 volumes). Chicago, IL, Charles H. Kerr and Co.

Marx, Karl. (1981) *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 3*. London: Penguin.

Marx, Karl. (1913) *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Chicago, Charles H. Kerr.

McClean-Ferris, Laura. (2012) Tino Sehgal: These Associations, Tate Modern, London. *The Independent*. [Online] 24th July. Available from: <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/reviews/tino-sehgal-these-associations-tate-modern-london-7972856.html> [Accessed 24th November 2014].

MEDEF. (2014) [Online] Available from: <http://eng.medef.com> [Accessed 26th October 2014].

MEDEF International: The French Business Confederation's Dedicated Service To The World. (2014) [Online] Available from: http://www.medefinternational.fr/MEDEF-International-the-French-Business-Confederation-s-dedicated-service-to-the-world_a213.html [Accessed 26th October 2014].

Merx, Sigrid (2012) The argument of autonomy: The missing link in the discursive arena. *The Walking Theory*, 20, 23–29.

Milne, Seumas. (2015) All over the world, the challenge to the old order is growing: The powers that be will fight back against attempts to change the status quo, economically or globally. *The Guardian*. [Online] 1st January. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jan/01/challenge-to-old-order-growing> [Accessed 2nd January 2015].

Moisdon, Stéphanie. (2003) moi je dis, moi je dis....'. *Newspaper Jan Mot*. [Online] 36. Available from: http://www.janmot.com/tino_sehgal/text.php [Accessed 3 February 2012].

Moisdon, St phanie & Obrist, Hans Ulrich. (2007) 00s – The history of a decade that has not yet been named. *e-flux*. [Online] 2nd June. Available from: <http://2007.labiennaledelyon.com> and <http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/00s---the-history-of-a-decade-that-has-not-yet-been-named/> [Accessed 24th November 2014].

Museums Association. (2014) *Frequently asked questions*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/about/frequently-asked-questions> [Accessed 26th October 2014].

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Being Singular Plural*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Needham, Alex. (2012) Best art exhibitions of 2012, No 3—*These Associations* at Tate Modern. *The Guardian*. [Online] 19th December. Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2012/dec/19/these-associations-tate-modern?intcmp=ILCMUSTXT9386> [Accessed 9th September 2014].

Opera National de Paris. (2013) *The Paris Opera*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.operadeparis.fr/en/> [Accessed 5th October 2013].

Occupy Democracy. (2014) *Return to Parliament Square on 21st November at 6pm*. [Online] Available from: <http://occupydemocracy.org.uk> [Accessed 24th November 2014].

Oxford Dictionaries. (2014a) ‘capitalism’. [Online] Available from: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/capitalism> [Accessed 24th November 2014].

Oxford Dictionaries. (2014b) ‘neoliberal’. [Online] Available from: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/neo-liberal?q=neoliberalisms#neo-liberal__5 [Accessed 24th November 2014].

Oxford Dictionary of English (3 ed.). (2014a) ‘conceit’. Stevenson, Angus (ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Oxford Dictionary of English (3 ed.). (2014b) ‘intervene’. Stevenson, Angus (ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pakes, Anna. (2004) Stepping through the looking glass? The aesthetics and politics of Daniel Larrieu's *Mobile ou le Miroir du Ch teau*. *Dance Research*, 22 (1), 22–44.

Paramana, Katerina. (2011) Muddle, muddle, toil and trouble: Disorder and potentiality. *activate*, 1 (1). [Online] Available from: http://www.thisisactivate.net/thisisac_roeham/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Paramana-Muddle-Muddle-Toil-and-Trouble.pdf [Accessed 24th November 2014].

Phelan, Peggy. (1997) *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories*. London, Routledge.

- Phelan, Peggy. (1993) *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. London, Routledge.
- Performance Matters. (2009-2013)[Online] Available from: <http://www.thisisperformancematters.co.uk> [Accessed 24th November 2014].
- Plato. (1992) *Republic*. Cambridge, MA, Hackett Publishing Company.
- Ploebst, Helmut. (2001) *No Wind No Word. Neue Choreographie in der Gesellschaft des Spektakels / New Choreography in the Society of the Spectacle*. München, K. Kieser.
- Pope, Miranda. (2012) Wish you were here: Tino Sehgal at the Tate. *The Weeklings*. [Online] 18th November. Available from: <http://www.theweeklings.com/mpope/2012/11/18/wish-you-were-here-tino-sehgal-at-the-tate/> [Accessed 24th November 2014].
- Pouillaude, Frédéric. (2007) Scène and Contemporaneity. *TDR*, 51 (2), 124–135.
- Protevi, John. (2009) *Political Affect: Connecting the Social and the Somatic*. Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press.
- Rae, Paul. (2014) e-smoker's theatre, or, modern drama for vapers. *Performance Paradigm*, 10, 67–81.
- Rancière, Jacques & Corroto, Paula. (2012) Entrevista a Jacques Rancière: 'Hablar de crisis de la sociedad es culpar a sus víctimas' [Jacques Rancière interview: 'Democracy is not, to begin with, a form of State']. *Público.es*. [Online] 15th January. Available from: <http://www.publico.es/culturas/416926/hablar-de-crisis-de-la-sociedad-es-culpar-a-sus-victimas> and <http://hiredknives.wordpress.com/2012/01/21/jacques-ranciere-interview-democracy-is-not-t/> 21 January 2012 [Accessed 4th November 2014].
- Rancière, Jacques. (2010) *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. London, Continuum.
- Rancière, Jacques. (2007). The emancipated spectator. *Artforum*, XLV(7), 271-277.
- Rancière, Jacques. (2004) *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*. London, Continuum.
- Ridout, Nicholas. (2009) *Theatre & Ethics*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ridout, Nicholas. (2008) You, the Spectator. In: Brine, Daniel (ed.) *The Live Art Almanac*. London, Live Art Development Agency, pp. 17–20.
- Ridout, Nicholas. (2006) *Stage Fright, Animals, and Other Theatrical Problems*. Cambridge, MA, Cambridge University Press.
- Schechner, Richard. (1988) *Performance Theory*. New York, Routledge.
- Schneider, Rebecca. (2001) Archives: Performance remains'. *Performance Research*, 6 (2), 100–108.

Scholes, Robert. (1980) Language, narrative, and anti-narrative. In: Mitchell, W.J.T. (ed.) *On narrative*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 201-208.

Sconce, Jeffrey. (1995) Trashing the academy. *Screen*, 36 (4), 371–393.

Searle, Adrian. (2012) Tino Sehgal: *These Associations*—review. *The Guardian*. [Online] 23rd July. Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2012/jul/23/tino-sehgal-these-associations-review> [Accessed 9th September 2014].

Sehgal, Tino & Sennett, Richard. (2012) *Tino Sehgal in conversation*. [Lecture] Goethe-Institut London, 20th October. Info Available from: <http://www.goethe.de/ins/gb/lon/ver/acv/bku/2012/en9798367v.htm> [Accessed 21st August 2014].

Sehgal, Tino. (May–October 2012) Comments during workshops and rehearsals for *These Associations*. From author's personal notes, Tate Modern, London.

Sennett, Richard. (2012) *Together: The rituals, pleasures and politics of co-operation*. [Book Launch Talk] London, London School of Economics, 6th February.

Simondon, Gilbert (2005) *L'Individu et sa Genèse Physico-Biologique: L'individuation à la lumière des notions de forme et d'information*. Paris, Millon.

Smith, Adam. ([1776] 1904) *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. London, Methuen and Co., Ltd.

Smith, Helena. (2014) Greece on brink of new 'catastrophe' as PM battles to avert snap elections. *The Guardian*. [Online] 27th December. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/27/greek-prime-minister-elections-antonis-samaras-austerity-syriza> Saturday [Accessed 27th December 2014].
27 December

Stein, Danielle. (2009) Tino Sehgal. *Wmagazine*. [Online] Available from: http://www.wmagazine.com/artdesign/2009/11/tino_sehgal?printable=true [Accessed 22nd January 2012].

Stevens, Lara. (2014) Networks of resistance: Connecting stage, street and social media in Tony Kushner's *Only We Who Guard The Mystery Shall Be Unhappy*. *Performance Paradigm* 10, 35-47.

Steyerl, Hito. (2010) Politics of art: Contemporary art and the transition to post-democracy. *e-flux*. [Online] 21. Available from: <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/politics-of-art-contemporary-art-and-the-transition-to-post-democracy> [Accessed 24th March 2012].

Stiegler, Bernard. (2010) *For a New Critique of Political Economy*. Cambridge, MA, Polity Press.

Tate. (2014) *Who we are*. [Online] Available from:

<http://www.tate.org.uk/about/who-we-are> [Accessed 26th October 2014].

Tate. (2013). *Archive: Journeys: Tate History*. [Online] Available from: http://www2.tate.org.uk/archivejourneys/historyhtml/bld_modern.htm [Accessed 26th October 2014].

Tate Modern. (2011) *The Unilever Series: Ai Weiwei: Sunflower Seeds*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/unilever-series-ai-weiwei-sunflower-seeds> [Accessed 26th October 2010].

Tate Modern. (2001) *No ghost just a shell*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/CollectionDisplays?venueid=2&roomid=5676> [Accessed 17th March 2012].

The American Heritage Medical Dictionary. (2007) 'melancholia'. [Online] Available from: <http://medicaldictionary.thefreedictionary.com/melancholia> [Accessed 23rd May 2012].

The Foundation of the Hellenic World. (2014) *Byzantine Literature*. [Online] Available from: http://www.fhw.gr/projects/cooperations/byzantine_literature/gr/700/705ap4.html [Accessed 20th January 2013].

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary. (2014a) 'capitalism'. [Online] Available from: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/capitalism> [Accessed 20th October 2014].

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary. (2014b) 'neoliberal'. [Online] Available from: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/neoliberal> [Accessed 20th October 2014].

The Mont Pelerin Society. (2015) *About MPS*. [Online] Available from: <https://www.montpelerin.org/montpelerin/mpsAbout.html> [Accessed 11 May 2015].

UK©CS: The UK Copyright Service. (2014a) *Copyright law*. [Online]. Available from: http://www.copyrightservice.co.uk/copyright/p01_uk_copyright_law [Accessed 20th October 2014].

UK©CS: The UK Copyright Service. (2014b) *Copyleft*. [Online] Available from: http://www.copyrightservice.co.uk/copyright/p20_copleft [Accessed 20th October 2014].

Vaggi, Gianni & Groenewegen, Peter. (2003) *A Concise History of Economic Thought: From Mercantilism to Monetarism*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Virno, Paolo. (2007) *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*. Los Angeles, CA, Semiotext(e).

Visel, Dan. (2010) this progress. *if:book : A project of the institute for the future of the book*. [Online] 13th March. Available from: http://www.futureofthebook.org/blog/archives/2010/03/against_writingthis_progress.html [Accessed 22nd January 2012].

Vujanović, Ana. (2014) *Public Good will not be Curated*. [Lecture, BMW Tate Live: *Spatial Confessions* ('On the Question of Instituting the Public')] Tate Modern, London, 24 May.

Wee , C.J. W.-L. (2014) Contemporary art, the contemporary and late capitalism. *Performance Paradigm*, 10, 6–16.

Wookey, Sara. (2011) Open letter to artists. *The Performance Club*. [Online] 23rd November. Available from: <http://theperformanceclub.org/2011/11/open-letter-to-artists/> [Accessed 11th May 2015].

Žižek, Slavoj. (2015) Slavoj Žižek: The Urgent Necessity of a Syriza Victory in Greece *In These Times*. [Online] 22nd January. Available from: http://inthesetimes.com/article/17561/zizek_greece_syriza [Accessed 22 January].

Žižek, Slavoj. (2012) Slavoj Žižek: Don't Act. Just Think. *YouTube*. [Online] Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgR6uaVqWsQ> [Accessed 30 August 2012].

Žižek, Slavoj. (2011) Violência. *YouTube*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H97abQulc2E> [Accessed 30th May 2014].

Žižek, Slavoj & Ramadan, Tariq. (2011). *What do you think? Egypt's political future*. *YouTube*. [Online] 3 February. Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pieE1EuSCsY> [Accessed 30th May 2014].

Žižek, Slavoj. (2010) *Living in the End Times*. London, Verso.

Žižek, Slavoj. (2006) Robespierre or the 'divine violence' of terror. *Lacan*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.lacan.com/zizrob.htm> [Accessed 24th November 2014].